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The Bramleighs of Bishop's Folly.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A SPECIAL MISSION.



WHEN a very polite note from Lord Culduff to Mr. Cutbill expressed the deep regret he felt at not being able to receive that gentleman at dinner, as an affair of much moment required his presence at Naples, the noble lord was more correct than it was his usual fate to be in matters of apology. The fact was, that his lordship had left England several weeks before, charged with a most knotty and difficult mission to the Neapolitan court; and though the question involved the misery of imprisonment to some of the persons concerned, and had called forth more than one indignant appeal for information in the House, the great diplomatist sauntered leisurely over the Continent, stopping to chat with a Minister here, or dine with a reigning Prince there, not suffering himself to be hurried by the business before him, or in any way influenced by the petulant despatches and telegrams which F. O. persistently sent after him.

One of his theories was, that in diplomacy everything should be done in a sort of dignified languor that excluded all thought of haste.

or of emergency. "Haste implies pressure," he would say, "and pressure means weakness: therefore, always be slow, occasionally even to apathy."

There was no denying it, he was a great master in that school of his art which professed to baffle all efforts at inquiry. No man ever wormed a secret from him that he desired to retain, or succeeded in entrapping him in any accidental admission. He could talk for hours with a frankness that was positively charming. He could display a candour that seemed only short of indiscretion; and yet, when you left him, you found you had carried away nothing beyond some neatly turned aphorisms, and a few very harmless imitations of Macchiavellian subtlety. Like certain men who are fond of showing how they can snuff a candle with a bullet, he was continually exhibiting his skill at fence, with the added assurance that nothing would grieve him so ineffably as any display of his ability at your expense.

He knew well that these subtleties were no longer the mode; that men no longer tried to outwit each other in official intercourse; that the time for such feats of smartness had as much gone by as the age of high neck-cloths and tight coats; but yet, as he adhered to the old dandyism of the Regency in his dress, he maintained the old traditions of finesse in his diplomacy, and could no more have been betrayed into a Truth than he could have worn a Jim Crow. For that mere plodding, commonplace race of men that now filled "the line" he had the most supreme contempt; men who had never uttered a smart thing, or written a clever one. Diplomacy without epigram was like a dinner without truffles. It was really pleasant to hear him speak of the great days of Metternich and Nesselrode and Talleyrand, when a frontier was settled by a bon mot, and a dynasty decided by a doggerel. The hoarse roar of the multitude had not in those times disturbed the polished solemnity of the council-chamber, and the high-priests of statecraft celebrated their mysteries unmolested.

"The ninth telegram, my lord," said Temple, as he stood with a cipher despatch in his hand, just as Lord Culduff had reached his hotel at Naples.

"Transcribe it, my dear boy, and let us hear it."

"I have, my lord. It runs, 'Where is the special envoy? Let him report himself by telegraph.'"

"Reply, 'At dinner, at the Hôtel Victoria; in passably good health, and indifferent spirits.'"

"But, my lord——"

"There, you'd better dress. You are always late. And tell the people here to serve oysters every day till I countermand them; and taste the Chablis, please; I prefer it to Sauterne, if it be good. The telegram can wait."

"I was going to mention, my lord, that Prince Castelmuro has called twice to-day, and begged he might be informed of your arrival. Shall I write him a line?"

"No. The request must be replied to by him to whom it was addressed,—the landlord perhaps, or the *laquais-de-place*."

"The King is most anxious to learn if you have come."

"His Majesty shall be rewarded for his courteous impatience. I shall ask an audience to-morrow."

"They told me dinner was served," said Lady Culduff, angrily, as she entered the room, dressed as if for a court entertainment; "and I hurried down without putting on my gloves."

"Let me kiss your ladyship's hand so temptingly displayed," said he, stooping and pressing it to his lips.

An impatient gesture of the shoulder, and a saucy curl of the lip, were the only response to this gallantry.

A full half-hour before Lord Culduff appeared Temple Bramleigh re-entered, dressed for dinner.

"Giacomo is at his old tricks, Temple," said she, as she walked the room impatiently. "His theory is that every one is to be in waiting on my lord; and I have been here now close on three-quarters of an hour, expecting dinner to be announced. Will you please to take some trouble about the household, or let us have an attaché who will?"

"Giacomo is impossible—that's the fact; but it's no use saying so."

"I know that," said she, with a malicious twinkle of the eye. "The man who is so dexterous with rouge and pomatum cannot be spared. But can you tell me, Temple, why we came here? There was no earthly reason to quit a place that suited us perfectly because Lady Augusta Bramleigh wished to do us an impertinence."

"Oh, but we ought to have been here six weeks ago! They are frantic at 'the Office' at our delay, and there will be a precious to-do about it in the House."

"Culduff likes that. If he has moments that resemble happiness, they are those when he is so palpably in the wrong that they would ruin any other man than himself."

"Well, he has got one of them now, I can tell you."

"Oh, I am aware of what you diplomatic people call great emergencies, critical conjunctures, and the like; but as Lord Watermore said the other evening, 'all your falls are like those in the circus—you always come down upon saw-dust.'"

"There's precious little saw-dust here. It's a case will make a tremendous noise in England. When a British subject has been ironed and—"

"Am I late? I shall be in despair, my lady, if I have kept you waiting," said Lord Culduff, entering in all the glory of red ribbon and Guelph, and with an unusually brilliant glow of youth and health in his features.

It was with a finished gallantry that he offered his arm, and his smile, as he led her to the dinner-room, was triumph itself. What a contrast to the moody discontent on her face; for she did not even affect to listen to

his excuses, or bestow the slightest attention on his little flatteries and compliments. During the dinner Lord Culduff alone spoke. He was agreeable after his manner, which was certainly a very finished manner ; and he gave little reminiscences of the last time he had been at Naples, and the people he had met, sketching their eccentricities and oddities most amusingly, for he was a master in those light touches of satire which deal with the ways of society, and, perhaps, to any one but his wife he would have been most entertaining and pleasant. She never deigned the very faintest recognition of what he said. She neither smiled when he was witty, nor looked shocked at his levities. Only once, when, by a direct appeal to her, silence was impossible, she said, with a marked spitefulness, " You are talking of something very long ago. I think I heard of that when I was a child." There was a glow under his lordship's rouge as he raised his glass to his lips, and an almost tremor in his voice when he spoke again.

" I'm afraid you don't like Naples, my lady ? "

" I detest it."

" The word is strong; let it be my care to try and induce you to recall it."

" It will be lost time, my lord. I always hated the place, and the people too."

" You were pleased with Rome, I think ? "

" And that possibly was the reason we left it. I mean," said she, blushing with shame at the rudeness that had escaped her, " I mean that one is always torn away from the place they are content to live in. It is the inevitable destiny."

" Very pleasant claret that for hotel wine," said Lord Culduff, passing the bottle to Temple. " The small race of travellers who frequent the Continent now rarely call for the better wines, and the consequence is that Margaux and Marcobrunner get that time to mature in the cellars, which was denied to them in former times."

A complete silence now ensued. At last Lord Culduff said, " Shall we have coffee ? " and offering his arm with the same courteous gallantry as before, he led Lady Culduff into the drawing-room, bowing, as he relinquished her hand, as though he stood in presence of a queen. " I know you are very tolerant," said he, with a bewitching smile, " and as we shall have no visitors this evening, may I ask the favour of being permitted a cigarette—only one ? "

" As many as you like. I am going to my room, my lord." And ere he could hasten to open the door, she swept haughtily out of the room and disappeared.

" We must try and make Naples pleasant for my lady," said Lord Culduff, as he drew his chair to the fire ; but there was, somehow, a malicious twinkle in his eye and a peculiar curl of the lip as he spoke that scarcely vouched for the loyalty of his words ; and that Temple heard him with distrust seemed evident by his silence. " You'd better go over

to the Legation and say we have arrived. If Blagden asks when he may call, tell him at two to-morrow. Let them send over all the correspondence; and I think we shall want some one out of the chancellerie. Whom have they got? Throw your eye over the list."

Opening a small volume bound in red morocco, Temple read out, "Minister and envoy, Sir Geoffrey Blagden, K.C.B.; first secretary, Mr. Tottenham; second secretaries, Ralph Howard, the Hon. Edward Eccles, and W. Thornton; third secretary, George Hilliard; attaché, Christopher Stepney."

"I only know one of these men; indeed, I can scarcely say I know him. I knew his father, or his grandfather perhaps. At all events, take some one who writes a full hand, with the letters very upright, and who seldom speaks, and never has a cold in his head."

"You don't care for any one in particular?" asked Temple, meekly.

"Of course not; no more than for the colour of the horse in a Hansom. If Blagden hints anything about dining with him, say I don't dine out; though I serve her Majesty, I do not mean to destroy my constitution; and I know what a legation dinner means, with a Scotchman for the chief of the mission. I'm so thankful he is not married, or we should have his wife calling on my lady. You can dine there if you like; indeed, perhaps, you ought. If Blagden has an opera-box, say my lady likes the theatre. I think that's all. Stay, don't let him pump you about my going to Vienna; and drop in on me when you come back."

Lord Culduff was fast asleep in a deep arm-chair before his dressing-room fire when Temple returned. The young man looked wearied and worn out, as well he might; for the Minister had insisted on going over the whole "question" to him, far less, indeed, for his information or instruction, than to justify every step the Legation had taken, and to show the utter unfairness and ungenerosity of the Foreign Office in sending out a special mission to treat a matter which the accredited envoy was already bringing to a satisfactory conclusion.

"No, no, my dear boy, no blue-books, no correspondence. I shook my religious principles in early life by reading Gibbon, and I never was quite sure of my grammar since I studied diplomatic despatches. Just tell me the matter as you'd tell a scandal or a railway accident."

"Where shall I begin then?"

"Begin where we come in."

"Ah, but I can't tell where that is. You know, of course, that there was a filibustering expedition which landed on the coast, and encountered the revenue guard, and overpowered them, and were in turn attacked, routed, and captured by the Royal troops."

"Ta, ta, ta! I don't want all that. Come down to the events of June—June 27 they call it."

"Well, it was on that day when the *Ercole* was about to get under way, with two hundred of these fellows sentenced to the galleys for life, that a tremendous storm broke over the Bay of Naples. Since the

memorable hurricane of '92 there had been nothing like it. The sea-wall of the Chiaja was washed away, and a frigate was cast on shore at Caserta with her bowsprit in the palace windows ; all the lower town was under water, and many lives lost. But the damage at sea was greatest of all : eight fine ships were lost, the crews having, with some few exceptions, perished with them."

"Can't we imagine a great disaster—a very great disaster ? I'll paint my own storm, so pray go on."

"Amongst the merchant shipping was a large American barque which rode out the gale, at anchor, for several hours ; but, as the storm increased, her captain, who was on shore, made signal to the mate to slip his cable and run for safety to Castellamare. The mate, a young Englishman, named Rogers—"

"Samuel Rogers ?"

"The same, my lord, though it is said not to be his real name. He, either misunderstanding the signal—or, as some say, wilfully mistaking its meaning—took to his boat, with the eight men he had with him, and rowed over to a small despatch-boat of the Royal Navy, which was to have acted as convoy to the *Ercole*, but whose officers were unable to get on board of her, so that she was actually under the command of a petty officer. Rogers boarded her, and proposed to the man in command to get up steam, and try to save the lives of the people who were perishing on every hand. He refused : an altercation ensued, and the English—for they were all English—overpowered them and sent them below—"

"Don't say under hatches, my dear boy, or I shall expect to see you hitching your trousers next."

Temple reddened, but went on : "They got up steam in all haste, and raised their anchor, but only at the instant that the *Ercole* foundered, quite close to them, and the whole sea was covered with the soldiers and the galley-slaves, who had jumped overboard, and the ship went down. Rogers made for them at once and rescued above a hundred—mostly of the prisoners—but he saved also many of the crew, and the soldiers. From four o'clock till nigh seven, he continued to cruise back and forward through the bay, assisting every one who needed help, and saving life on every side. As the gale abated, yielding to the piteous entreaties of the prisoners, whom he well knew were political offenders, he landed them all near Baia, and was quietly returning to the mooring-ground whence he had taken the despatch-boat, when he was boarded by two armed boats' crews of the Royal Navy, ironed and carried off to prison."

"That will do, I know the rest. Blagden asked to have them tried in open court, and was told that the trial was over, and that they had been condemned to death, but the sentence, commuted by royal mercy, to hard labour at the galleys. I knew your long story before you told it, but listened to hear what new element you might have interpolated since you saw the people at the Legation. I find you, on the whole, very correct. How the Neapolitan Government and H. M.'s Ministers have mistaken,

mystified, and slanged each other ; how they have misinterpreted law and confounded national right ; how they have danced a reel through all justice, and changed places with each other some half-dozen times, so that an arbiter—if there were one—would put them both out of court—I have read all in the private correspondence. Even the people in Parliament, patent bunglers as they are in foreign customs, began to ask themselves, Is Filangieri in the pay of her Majesty ? and how comes it that Blagden is in the service of Naples ? ”

“ Oh, it's not so bad as that ! ”

“ Yes, it's fully as bad as that. Such a muddled correspondence was probably never committed to print. They thought it a controversy, but the combatants never confronted each other. One appealed to humanity, the other referred to the law ; one went off in heroics about gallantry, and the other answered by the galleys. People ought to be taught that diplomats do not argue, or if they do, they are mere tyros at their trade. Diplomats insinuate, suppose, suggest, hope, fear, and occasionally threaten ; and with these they take in a tolerably wide sweep of human motives. There, go to bed now, my dear boy ; you have had enough of precepts for one evening ; tell Giacomo not to disturb me before noon,—I shall probably write late into the night.”

Temple bowed and took his leave, but scarcely had he reached the stairs than Lord Culduff laid himself in his bed and went off into a sound sleep. Whether his rest was disturbed by dreams ; whether his mind went over the crushing things he had in store for the Neapolitan Minister, or the artful excuses he intended to write home ; whether he composed sonorous sentences for a blue-book, or invented witty epigrams for a “ private and confidential ; ” or whether he only dreamed of a new preparation of glycerine and otto of roses, which he had seen advertised as an “ invaluable accessory to the toilet,” this history does not, perhaps need not, record.

As, however, we are not about to follow the course of his diplomatic efforts in our next chapter, it is pleasant to take leave of him in his repose.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE CHURCH PATRONS.

As the season drew to its close at Albano, and the period of returning to Rome approached, the church committee, following the precedent of all previous years, fell out, and held a succession of vestry-meetings for mutual abuse and reprimand. Partisanship is the badge of church patrons, and while the parson had his adherents, and the organist his supporters, there were half-a-dozen very warm friends who advocated the cause of the bell-ringer—a drunken little heathen, who, because he had never crossed the threshold of a Catholic church for years, was given brevet rank as a member of the Reformed religion.

The time of auditing the church accounts is usually a sort of day of judgment on the clergyman. All the complaints that can be preferred against him are kept for that occasion. A laudable sentiment possibly prompts men to ascertain what they have got for their money; at all events, people in nowise remarkable for personal thrift show at such times a most searching spirit of inquiry, and eagerly investigate the cost of sweeping out the vestry and clear-starching the chaplain's bands.

As to the doctrine of the parson, and the value of his ministrations, there were a variety of opinions. He was too high for this one, too dry for that; he was not impressive, not solemn nor dignified with some, while others deemed him deficient in that winning familiarity which is so soothing to certain sinners. Some thought his sermons too high-flown and too learned, others asked why he only preached to the children in the gallery. On one only point was there anything like unanimity: each man who withdrew his subscription did so on principle. None, not one, referred his determination to contribute no longer to any motive of economy. All declared that it was something in the celebration of the service—a doctrine inculcated in the pulpit—something the parson had said or something he had worn—obliged them, “with infinite regret,” to withdraw what they invariably called their mite. In fact, one thing was clear: a more high-minded, right-judging, scrupulous body of people could not be found than the congregation, whatever might be said or thought of him whose duty it was to guide them.

Lady Augusta Bramleigh had gone off to Rome, and a small three-cornered note, highly perfumed, and most nervously written, informed the committee that she was quite ready to continue her former subscription, or more, if required; that she was charmed with the chaplain, pleased with the choir, and generally delighted with every one—a testimony more delicately valuable from the fact that she had been but once to church during the entire season.

Sir Marcus Cluff, after reading out the letter, took occasion to observe on the ventilation of the church, which was defective in many respects. There was a man in King Street—he thought his name was Harmond or something like Harmond, but it might be Fox—who had invented a self-revolving pane for church windows; it was perfectly noiseless, and the expense a mere trifle, though it required to be adjusted by one of the patentee's own people; some mistakes having occurred by blundering adaptation, by which two persons had been asphyxiated at Redhill.

The orator was here interrupted by Mrs. Trumper, who stoutly affirmed that she had come there that day at great inconvenience, and was in no wise prepared to listen to a discourse upon draughts, or the rival merits of certain plumbers. There were higher considerations than these that might occupy them, and she wished to know if M. L'Estrange was prepared to maintain the harsh, and she must say the ungenerous and unscholarlike view he had taken of the character of Judas. If so, she withdrew her subscription, but added that she would also in a pamphlet

explain to the world the reason of her retirement, as well as the other grounds of complaint she had against the chaplain.

One humble contributor of fifteen francs alleged that, though nut-crackers were a useful domestic implement, they formed an unpleasant accompaniment to the hymns, and occasionally startled devotionally minded persons during the service; and he added his profound regret at the seeming apathy of the clergyman to the indecent interruption; indeed, he had seen the parson sitting in the reading-desk, while these disturbances continued, to all appearance unmoved and indifferent.

A retired victualler, Mr. Mowser, protested that to see the walk of the clergyman, as he came up the aisle, "was enough for him;" and he had only come to the meeting to declare that he himself had gone over to the sect of the Nuremberg Christians, who, at least, were humble-minded and lowly, and who thought their pastor handsomely provided for with a thousand francs a year and a suit of black clothes at Christmas.

In a word, there was much discontent abroad, and a very general opinion seemed to prevail that, what with the increasing dearness of butchers' meat, and an extra penny lately added to the income-tax, it behoved every one to see what wise and safe economy could be introduced into their affairs. It is needless to say how naturally it suggested itself to each that the church subscription was a retrenchment at once practicable and durable.

Any one who wishes to convince himself how dear to the Protestant heart is the right of private judgment, has only to attend a vestry meeting of a church supported on the voluntary system. It is the very grandest assertion of that great principle. There is not a man there represented by ten francs' annual subscription who has not very decided opinions of the doctrine he requires for his money; and thus, while no one agreed with his neighbour, all concurred in voting that they deemed the chaplain had not fulfilled their expectations, and that they reserved their right to contribute or not for the ensuing year, as future thought and consideration should determine.

L'Estrange had gone in to Rome to meet Augustus Bramleigh and Ellen, who were coming to pass the Christmas with him, when Sir Marcus Cluff called to announce this unpleasant resolution of the church patrons.

"Perhaps I could see Miss L'Estrange?" said he to the servant, who had said her master was from home.

Julia was seated working at the window as Sir Marcus entered the room.

"I hope I do not come at an unseemly hour; I scarcely know the time one ought to visit here," he began, as he fumbled to untie the strings of his respirator. "How nice and warm your room is; and a south aspect, too. Ah! that's what my house fails in."

"I'm so sorry my brother is not at home, Sir Marcus. He will regret not meeting you."

"And I'm sorry, too. I could have broken the bad news to him, perhaps, better than—I mean—oh, dear! if I begin coughing, I shall

never cease. Would you mind my taking my drops? They are only aconite and lettuce; and if I might ask for a little fresh water. I'm so sorry to be troublesome."

Though all anxiety to know what bad news he referred, she hastened to order the glass of water he desired, and calmly resumed her seat.

"It's spasmodic, this cough. I don't know if that be any advantage, or the reverse; but the doctor says 'only spasmodic,' which would lead one to suppose it might be worse. Would you do me the great favour to drop thirty-five, be sure only thirty-five, of these? I hope your hand does not shake."

"No, Sir Marcus. It is very steady."

"What a pretty hand it is. How taper your fingers are, but you have these dimples at the knuckles they say are such signs of cruelty."

"Oh, Sir Marcus!"

"Yes, they say so. Nana Saib had them, and that woman—there, there, you have given me thirty-seven."

"No, I assure you, Sir Marcus; only thirty-five. I'm a practised hand at dropping medicine. My brother used to have violent headaches."

"And you always measured his drops, did you?"

"Always. I'm quite a clever nurse, I assure you."

"Oh, dear! do you say so?" And as he laid down his glass he looked at her with an expression of interest and admiration, which pushed her gravity to its last limit.

"I don't believe a word about the cruelty they ascribe to those dimples. I pledge you my word of honour I do not," said he, seriously.

"I'm sincerely glad to hear you say so," said she, trying to seem grave.

"And is your brother much of an invalid?"

"Not now. The damp climate of Ireland gave him headaches, but he rarely has them here."

"Ah, and you have such a quiet way of moving about; that gentle gliding step, so soothing to the sick. Oh, you don't know what a boon it is; and the common people never have it, nor can they acquire it. When you went to ring the bell, I said to myself, 'That's it! that's what all the teaching in the world cannot impart.'

"You will make me very vain, Sir Marcus. All the more that you give me credit for merits I never suspected."

"Have you a cold hand?" asked he, with a look of eagerness.

"I really don't know. Perhaps I have."

"If I might dare. Ah," said he, with much feeling, as he touched her hand in the most gentle manner—"Ah! that is the greatest gift of nature. A small hand, perfect in form, beautiful in colour, and cold as marble."

Julia could resist no longer, but laughed out one of those pleasant merry laughs whose music make an echo in the heart.

"I know well enough what you are saying to yourself. I think I hear you muttering, 'What an original, what a strange creature it is;' and so I am, I won't deny it. One who has been an invalid for eighteen years;

eighteen years passed in the hard struggle with an indolent alimentary system, for they say it's no more. There's nothing organic; nothing whatever. Structurally, said Dr. Borcas of Leamington, structurally you are as sound as a roach. I don't fully appreciate the comparison, but I take it the roach must be a very healthy fish. Oh, here's your brother coming across the garden. I wish he had not come just yet; I had a —no matter, perhaps you'd permit me to have a few words with you to-morrow?"

"To-morrow, or whenever you like, Sir Marcus; but pray forgive me if I run away now to ask my brother if our visitors have come."

"They'll be here to-morrow evening, Ju," said George, as she rushed to meet him. "Is that Cluff's phaeton I see at the gate?"

"Yes; the tiresome creature has been here the last hour. I'll not go back to him. You must take your share now."

By the time L'Estrange entered the room, Sir Marcus had replaced his respirator, and enveloped himself in two of his overcoats and a fur boa. "Oh, here you are," said he, speaking with much difficulty. "I can't talk now; it brings on the cough. Come over in the evening, and I'll tell you about it."

"About what, pray?" asked the other curtly.

"There's no use being angry. It only hurries the respiration, and chokes the pulmonary vessels. They won't give a sixpence—not one of them. They say that you don't preach St. Paul—that you think too much about works. I don't know what they don't say; but come over about seven."

"Do you mean that the subscribers have withdrawn from the church?"

Sir Marcus had not breath for further discussion, but made a gesture of assent with his head.

L'Estrange sank down on a chair overpowered, nor did he speak to, or notice, the other as he withdrew.

"Are you ill, dearest George?" said Julia, as she saw her brother pale and motionless on the chair. "Are you ill?"

"They've all withdrawn from the church, Julia. Cluff says they are dissatisfied with me, and will contribute no longer."

"I don't believe it's so bad as he says. I'm sure it's not. They cannot be displeased with you, George. It's some mere passing misconception. You know how they're given to these little bickerings and squabbles; but they have ever been kind and friendly to you."

"You always give me courage, Ju; and even when I have little heart for it, I like it."

"Come in to dinner now, George; and if I don't make you laugh, it's a wonder to me. I have had such a scene with Sir Marcus as might have graced a comedy."

It was not an easy task to rally her brother back to good spirits, but she did succeed at last. "And now," said she, as she saw him looking

once more at ease and cheerful, "what news of the Bramleighs—are they ever to come?"

"They'll be here to-morrow evening, Ju. Unless they were quite sure the Culduffs had left for Naples, they would not venture here; and perhaps they were so far in the right."

"I don't think so; at least, if I had been Nelly, I'd have given anything for such an opportunity of presenting myself to my distinguished relations and terrifying them by the thought of those attentions that they could neither give me nor deny me."

"No, no, Julia, nothing of the kind; there would be malice in that."

"Do I deny it? A great deal of malice in it; and there's no good comedy in life without a slight flavour of spitefulness. Oh, my poor dear George, what a deep sigh that was! How sad it is to think, that all your example and all your precept do so little, and that your sister acquires nothing by your companionship except the skill to torment you."

"But why will you say those things that you don't mean—that you couldn't feel?"

"I believe I do it, George, just the way a horse bounds and rears and buck-leaps. It does not help him on his road, but it lightens the journey; and then it offers such happy occasion for the exercise of that nice light hand of my brother to check these aberrations. You ought to be eternally grateful for the way I develope your talents as a moralist—I was going to say a horse-breaker."

"I suppose," said he, after a moment's silence, "I ought to go over to Sir Marcus and learn from him exactly how matters stand here."

"No, no; never mind him—at least, not this evening. Bores are bad enough in the morning, but after dinner, when one really wants to think well of their species, they are just intolerable; besides, I composed a little song while you were away, and I want you to hear it, and then you know we must have some serious conversation about Sir Marcus; he is to be here to-morrow."

"I declare, Ju—"

"There, don't declare, but open the pianoforte, and light the candles; and as I mean to sing for an hour at least, you may have that cigar that you looked so lovingly at, and put back into the case. Ain't I good for you, as the French say?"

"Very good, too good for me," said he, kissing her, and now every trace of his sorrow was gone, and he looked as happy as might be.

CHAPTER XLV.

A PLEASANT DINNER.

PRUDENT people will knit their brows and wise people shake their heads at the bare mention of it, but I cannot help saying that there is a wonderful fascination in those little gatherings which bring a few old

friends around the same board, who, forgetting all the little pinchings and straits of narrow fortune, give themselves up for once to enjoyment without a thought for the cost or a care for the morrow. I do not want this to pass for sound morality, nor for a discreet line of conduct; I only say that in the spirit that can subdue every sentiment that would jar on the happiness of the hour there is a strength and vitality that shows this feeling is not born of mere conviviality, but of something deeper, and truer, and heartier.

"If we only had poor Jack here," whispered Augustus Bramleigh to L'Estrange, as they drew around the Christmas fire, "I'd say this was the happiest hearth I know of."

"And have you no tidings of him?" said L'Estrange, in the same low tone; for, although the girls were in eager talk together, he was afraid Julia might overhear what was said.

"None, except that he sailed from China on board an American clipper for Smyrna, and I am now waiting for news from the Consul there, to whom I have written, enclosing a letter for him."

"And he is serving as a sailor?"

Bramleigh nodded.

"What is the mysterious conversation going on there?" said Julia. "How grave George looks, and Mr. Bramleigh seems overwhelmed with a secret of importance."

"I guess it," said Nelly, laughing. "Your brother is relating your interview with Sir Marcus Cluff, and they are speculating on what is to come of it."

"Oh, that reminds me," cried L'Estrange, suddenly, "Sir Marcus's servant brought me a letter just as I was dressing for dinner. Here it is. What a splendid seal—supporters, too! Have I permission to read?"

"Read, read by all means," cried Julia.

"DEAR SIR,—If I could have sufficiently conquered my bronchitis as to have ventured out this morning, I would have made you my personal apologies for not having received you last night when you did me the honour to call, as well as opened to you by word of mouth what I am now reduced to convey by pen."

"He is just as prolix as when he talks," said Julia.

"It's a large hand, however, and easy to read. 'My old enemy the larynx—more in fault than even the bronchial tubes—is again in arms—'"

"Oh, do spare us his anatomical disquisition, George. Skip him down to where he proposes for me."

"But it is what he does not. You are not mentioned in the whole of it. It is all about Church matters. It is an explanation of why every one has withdrawn his subscription and left the establishment, and why he alone is faithful and willing to contribute, even to the extent of five pounds additional—"

"This is too heartless by half; the man has treated me shamefully."

"I protest I think so too," said Nelly, with a mock seriousness ; "he relies upon your brother's gown for his protection."

"Shall I have him out ? But, by the way, why do you call me Mr. Bramleigh ? Wasn't I Augustus—or rather Gusty—when we met last ?"

"I don't think so ; so well as I remember, I treated you with great respect, dashed with a little bit of awe. You and your elder sister were always 'personages' to me."

"I cannot understand that. I can easily imagine Temple inspiring that deference you speak of."

"You were the true Prince, however, and I had all Falstaff's reverence for the true Prince."

"And yet you see after all I am like to turn out only a Pretender."

"By the way, the pretender is here ; I mean—if it be not a bull to say it—the real pretender, Count Pracontal."

"Count Pracontal de Bramleigh, George," said Julia, correcting him. "It is the drollest mode of assuming a family name I ever heard of."

"What is he like ?" asked Ellen.

"Like a very well-bred Frenchman of the worst school of French manners : he has none of that graceful ease and that placid courtesy of the past period, but he has abundance of the volatile readiness and showy smartness of the present day. They are a wonderful race, however, and their smattering is better than other men's learning."

"I want to see him," said Augustus.

"Well," broke in L'Estrange, "Lady Augusta writes to me to say that he wants to see *you*."

"What does Lady Augusta know of him ?"

"Heaven knows," cried Julia ; "but they are always together ; their rides over the Campagna furnish just now the chief scandal of Rome. George, you may see, looks very serious and rebukeful about it ; but, if the truth were told, there's a little jealousy at the root of his morality."

"I declare, Julia, this is too bad."

"Too true, also, my dear George. Will you deny that you used to ride out with her nearly every evening in the summer, rides that began at sunset and ended—I was always asleep when you came home, and so I never knew when they ended."

"Was she very agreeable ?" asked Nelly, with the faintest tinge of sharpness in her manner.

"The most—what shall I call it ?—inconsequent woman I ever met, mixing up things the most dissimilar together, and never dwelling for an instant on anything."

"How base men are," said Julia, with mock reproach in her voice. "This is the way he talks of a woman he absolutely persecuted with attentions the whole season. Would you believe it, Nelly, we cut up our nice little garden to make a school to train her horse in ?"

Whether it was that some secret intelligence was rapidly conveyed from Julia as she spoke to Nelly, or that the latter of herself caught up

the quizzing spirit of her attack, but the two girls burst out laughing, and George blushed deeply, in shame and irritation.

"First of all," said he, stammering with confusion, "she had a little Arab, the wickedest animal I ever saw. It wasn't safe to approach him; he struck out with his forelegs——"

"Come, Nelly," said Julia, rising, "we'll go into the drawing-room, and leave George to explain how he tamed the Arab and captivated the Arab's mistress, for your brother might like to learn the secret. You'll join us, gentlemen, when you wish for coffee."

"That was scarcely fair, Julia dear," said Nelly, when they were alone. "Your banter is sometimes too sharp for him."

"I can't help it, dearest—it is part of my nature. When I was a child, they could not take me to a wild-beast show, for I would insist on poking straws at the tiger—not that poor dear George has much 'tiger' in him. But do you know, Nelly," said she, in a graver tone, "that, when people are very poor, when their daily lives are beset by the small accidents of narrow fortune, there is a great philosophy in a little banter? You brush away many an annoyance by seeming to feel it matter for drollery, which, if taken seriously, might have made you fretful and peevish."

"I never suspected there was method in your madness, Ju," said Nelly, smiling.

"Nor was there, dearest; the explanation was almost an after-thought. But come now and tell me about yourselves."

"There is really little to tell. Augustus never speaks to me now of business matters. I think I can see that he is not fully satisfied with himself; but, rather than show weakness or hesitation, he is determined to go on as he began."

"And you are really going to this dreary place?"

"He says so."

"Would any good come, I wonder, of bringing your brother and Pracontal together? They are both men of high and generous feelings. Each seems to think that there ought to be some other settlement than a recourse to lawyers. Do you think he would refuse to meet Pracontal?"

"That is a mere chance. There are days he would not listen to such a proposal, and there are times he would accept it heartily; but the suggestion must not come from me. With all his love for me, he rather thinks that I secretly disapprove of what he has done, and would reverse it if I knew how."

"What if I were to hint at it? He already said he wished to see him. This might be mere curiosity, however. What if I were to say, 'Why not meet Pracontal? Why not see what manner of man he is? There is nothing more true than the saying that half the dislikes people conceive against each other would give way if they would condescend to become acquainted.'"

"As I have just said, it is a mere chance whether he would consent, and then——"

"Oh, I know! It would be also a chance what might come of it."

Just as she said this, the young men entered the room, with smiling faces, and apparently in high good-humour.

"Do you know the plan we've just struck out?" cried Bramleigh. "George is to come and live at Cattaro. I'm to make him consular chaplain."

"But is there such an appointment?" asked Julia, eagerly.

"Heaven knows; but if there is not, there ought to be."

"And the salary, Mr. Bramleigh. Who pays it? What is it?"

"There again I am at fault; but her Majesty could never intend we should live like heathens," said Augustus, "and we shall arrange it somehow."

"Oh, if it were not for 'somehow,'" said Julia, "we poor people would be worse off in life than we are; but there are so many what the watch-makers call escapements in existence, the machinery manages to survive scores of accidents."

"At all events we shall be all together," said Augustus, "and we shall show a stouter front to fortune than if we were to confront her singly."

"I think it a delightful plan," said Julia. "What says Nelly?"

"I think," said Nelly, gravely, "that it is more than kind in you to follow us into our banishment."

"Then, let us set off at once," said Augustus, "for I own to you I wish to be out of men's sight, out of ear-shot of their comments, while this suit is going on. It is the publicity that I dread far more than even the issue. Once that we reach this wild barbarism we are going to, you will see I will bear myself with better spirits and better temper."

"And will you not see M. Pracontal before you go?" asked Julia.

"Not if I can avoid it; unless, indeed, you all think I ought."

Julia looked at Nelly, and then at her brother. She looked as if she wanted them to say something—anything; but neither spoke, and then, with a courage that never failed her, she said—

"Of course we think that a meeting between two people who have no personal reasons for dislike, but have a great question to be decided in favour of one of them, cannot but be useful. If it will not lead to a friendship, it may at least disarm a prejudice."

"I wish I had you for my counsel, Julia," said Bramleigh, smiling. "Is it yet too late to send you a brief?"

"Perhaps I am engaged for the other side."

"At all events," said he, more seriously, "if it be a blunder to meet the man, it cannot much matter. The question between us must be decided elsewhere, and we need not add the prejudices of ignorance to the rancour of self-interest. I'll see him."

"That's right; I'm sure that's right," said L'Estrange. "I'll despatch a note to Lady Augusta, who is eager for your answer."

CHAPTER XLVI.

A STROLL AND A GOSSIP.

As well to have a long talk together as to enjoy the glorious beauty and freshness of the Campagna, the two young men set out the next morning for a walk to Rome. It was one of those still cold days of winter, with a deep blue sky above, and an atmosphere clear as crystal as they started.

There was not in the fortunes of either of them much to cheer the spirits or encourage hope, and yet they felt—they knew not why—a sense of buoyancy and light-heartedness they had not known for many a day back.

"How is it, George," asked Augustus, "can you explain it, that when the world went well with me, when I could stroll out into my own woods, and walk for hours over my own broad acres, I never felt so cheery as I do to-day?"

"It was the same spirit made you yesterday declare you enjoyed our humble dinner with a heartier zest than those grand banquets that were daily served up at Castello."

"Just so. But that does not solve the riddle for me. I want to know the why of all this. It is no high sustaining consciousness of doing the right thing; no grand sense of self-approval: for, in the first place, I never had a doubt that we were not the rightful owners of the estate, nor am I now supported by the idea that I am certainly and indubitably on the right road, because nearly all my friends think the very reverse." L'Estrange made no answer. Bramleigh went on: "You yourself are so minded, George. Out with it, man; say at once you think me wrong."

"I have too little faith in my own judgment to go that far."

"Well, will you say that you would have acted differently yourself? Come, I think you can answer that question."

"No, I cannot."

"You can't say whether you would have done as I have, or something quite different?"

"No; there is only one thing I know I should have done—I'd have consulted Julia."

If Bramleigh laughed at this avowal the other joined him, and for a while nothing was said on either side. At last Bramleigh said, "I, too, have a confession to make. I thought that if I were to resist this man's claim by the power of superior wealth I should be acting as dishonourably as though I had fought an unarmed man with a revolver. I told Sedley my scruples, but though he treated them with little deference; there they were, and I could not dismiss them. It was this weakness—Sedley would give it no other name than weakness—of mine that made him incline to settle the matter by a compromise. For a while I yielded to the notion; I'm afraid that I yielded even too far—at least Cutbill opines that one of my letters actually gives a distinct consent, but I don't think so. I know

that my meaning was to say to my lawyer, ‘This man’s claim may push me to publicity and much unpleasantness, without any benefit to him. He may make me a nine-days’ wonder in the newspapers and a town-talk, and never reap the least advantage from it. To avoid such exposure I would pay, and pay handsomely; but if you really opined that I was merely stifling a just demand, such a compromise would only bring me lasting misery.’ Perhaps I could not exactly define what I meant; perhaps I expressed myself imperfectly and ill; but Sedley always replied to me by something that seemed to refute my reasonings. At the same time Lord Culduff and Temple treated my scruples with an open contempt. I grew irritable, and possibly less reasonable, and I wrote long letters to Sedley to justify myself and sustain the position I had taken. Of these, indeed of none of my letters, have I copies; and I am told now that they contain admissions which will show that I yielded to the plan of a compromise. Knowing, however, what I felt—what I still feel on the matter—I will not believe this. At all events the world shall see now that I leave the law to take its course. If Pracontal can establish his right, let him take what he owns. I only bargain for one thing, which is, not to be expelled ignominiously from the house in which I was never the rightful owner. It is the act of abdication, George—the moment of dethronement, that I could not face. It is an avowal of great weakness, I know; but I struggle against it in vain. Every morning when I awoke the same thought met me, am I a mere pretender here? and by some horrible perversity, which I cannot explain, the place, the house, the grounds, the gardens, the shrubberies, the deer-park, grew inexpressibly more dear to me than ever I had felt them. There was not an old ash on the lawn that I did not love; the shady walks through which I had often passed without a thought upon them grew now to have a hold upon and attraction for me that I cannot describe. What shall I be without these dear familiar spots? What will become of me when I shall no longer have these deep glades, these silent woods, to wander in? This became at last so strong upon me that I felt there was but one course to take—I must leave the place at once, and never return to it till I knew that it was my own beyond dispute. I could do that now, while the issue was still undetermined, which would have broken my heart if driven to do on compulsion. Of course this was a matter between me and my own conscience; I had not courage to speak of it to a lawyer, nor did I. Sedley, however, was vexed that I should take any steps without consulting him. He wrote me a letter—almost an angry letter—and he threatened—for it really amounted to a threat, to say that, to a client so decidedly bent on guiding his own case, he certainly felt his services could scarcely be advantageously contributed. I rejoined, perhaps not without irritation; and I am now expecting by each post either his submission to my views, or to hear that he has thrown up the direction of my cause.”

“And he was your father’s adviser for years!” said L’Estrange, with a tone almost despondent.

"But for which he never would have assumed the tone of dictation he has used towards me. Lord Culduff, I remember, said, 'The first duty of a man on coming to his property is to change his agent, and his next to get rid of the old servants.' I do not like the theory, George; but from a certain point of view it is not without reason."

"I suspect that neither you nor I want to look at life from that point of view," said L'Estrange with some emotion.

"Not till we can't help it, I'm sure; but these crafty men of the world say that we all arrive at their *modus operandi* in the end; that however generously, however trustfully and romantically, we start on the morning of life, before evening we come to see that in this game we call the world it is only the clever player that escapes ruin."

"I don't—that is, I won't believe that."

"Quite right, George. The theory would tell terribly against fellows like us; for let us do our very best we must be bunglers at the game. What a clever pair of hacks are those yonder! that grey the lady is on has very showy action."

"Look at the liver chestnut the groom is riding,—there's the horse for my money,—so long and so low,—a regular turnspit, and equal to any weight. I declare, that's Lady Augusta, and that's Pracontal with her. See how the Frenchman charges the ox-fences; he'll come to grief if he rides at speed against timber."

The party on horseback passed in a little dip of the ground near them at a smart canter, and soon were out of sight again.

"What a strange intimacy for her, is it not?"

"Julia says, the dash of indiscretion in it was the temptation she couldn't resist, and I suspect she's right. She said to me herself one day, 'I love skating, but I never care for it except the ice is so thin that I hear it giving way on every side as I go.'

"She gave you her whole character in that one trait. The pleasure that wasn't linked to a peril had no charm for her. She ought, however, to see that the world will regard this intimacy as a breach of decency."

"So she does; she's dying to be attacked about it; at least, so Julia says."

"The man too, if he be an artful fellow, will learn many family details about us, that may disserve us. If it went no further than to know in what spirit we treat his claim,—whether we attach importance to his pretensions or not,—these are all things he need not, should not be informed upon."

"Cutbill, who somehow hears everything, told us t'other morning, that Pracontal is 'posted up,'—that was his phrase—as to the temper and nature of every member of your family, and knows to a nicety how to deal with each."

"Then I don't see why we should meet."

"Julia says it is precisely for that very reason; people are always disparaged by these biographical notices, their caprices are assumed to be

tastes, and their mere humours are taken for traits of character ; and she declares that it will be a good service to the truth that bringing you together. Don't take my version, however, of her reasons, but ask her to give them to you herself."

"Isn't that the wall of the City ? I declare we are quite close to Rome already. Now then, first to leave my name for Lady Augusta—not sorry to know I shall not find her at home, for I never understood her, George. I never do understand certain people, whether their levity means that it is the real nature, or simply a humour put on to get rid of you ; as though to say, rather than let you impose any solemnity upon me, or talk seriously, I'll have a game at shuttlecock !"

"She always puzzled me," said L'Estrange, "but that wasn't hard to do."

"I suspect, George, that neither you nor I know much about women."

"For my part, I know nothing at all about them."

"And I not much."

After this frank confession on either side, they walked along, each seemingly deep in his own thought, and said little till they reached the City. Leaving them, then, on their way to Lady Augusta's house, where Bramleigh desired to drop his card, we turn for a moment to the little villa at Albano, in front of which a smart groom was leading a lady's horse, while in the distance a solitary rider was slowly walking his horse, and frequently turning his looks towards the gate of the villa.

The explanation of all this was, that Lady Augusta had taken the opportunity of being near the L'Estranges to pay a visit to the Bramleighs, leaving Pracontal to wait for her till she came out.

"This visit is for you, Nelly," said Julia, as she read the card ; "and I'll make my escape."

She had but time to get out of the room when Lady Augusta entered.

"My dear child," said she, rushing into Nelly's arms, and kissing her with rapturous affection. "My dear child, what a happiness to see you again, and how well you are looking ; you're handsomer, I declare, than Marion. Yes, darling,—don't blush ; it's perfectly true. Where's Augustus ? has he come with you ?"

"He has gone in to Rome to see you," said Nelly, whose face was still crimson, and who felt flurried and agitated by the flighty impetuosity of the other.

"I hope it was to say that you are both coming to me ? Yes, dearest, I'll take no excuse. It would be a town-talk if you stopped anywhere else ; and I have such a nice little villa—a mere baby-house ; but quite large enough to hold you ; and my brother-in-law will take Augustus about, and show him Rome, and I shall have you all to myself. We have much to talk of, haven't we ?"

Nelly murmured an assent, and the other continued.

"It's all so sudden, and so dreadful,—one doesn't realize it ; at least I don't. And it usually takes me an hour or two of a morning to convince

me that we are all ruined ; and then I set to work thinking how I'm to live on—I forget exactly what—how much is it, darling ? Shall I be able to keep my dear horses ? I'd rather die than part with Ben Azir : one of the Sultan's own breeding ; an Arab of blue blood, Nelly,—think of that ! I've refused fabulous sums for him ; but he is such a love, and follows me everywhere, and rears up when I scold him,—and all to be swept away as if it was a dream. What do you mean to do, dearest ? Marry, of course. I know that,—but in the meanwhile ? ”

“ We are going to Cattaro. Augustus has been named consul there.”

“ Darling child, you don't know what you are saying. Isn't a consul a horrid creature that lives in a seaport, and worries merchant seamen, and imprisons people who have no passports ? ”

“ I declare I haven't a notion of his duties,” said Nelly, laughing.

“ Oh, I know them perfectly. Papa always wrote to the consul about getting heavy baggage through the custom-house ; and when our servants quarrelled with the porters, or the hotel people, it was the consul sent some of them to jail ; but you are aware, darling, he isn't a creature one knows. They are simply impossible, dear, impossible.” And as she spoke she lay back in her chair, and fanned herself as though actually overcome by the violence of her emotion.

“ I must hope Augustus will not be impossible ; ” and Nelly said this with a dry mixture of humour and vexation.

“ He can't help it, dearest. It will be from 'no fault of his own. Let a man be what he may, once he derogates there's an end of him. It sounds beautifully, I know, to say that he will remain gentleman and man of station through all the accidents of life ; so he might, darling, so long as he did nothing—absolutely nothing. The moment, however, he touches an “ *emploi* ” it's all over ; from that hour he becomes the custom's creature, or the consul, or the factor, or whatever it be irrevocably. Do you know that is the only way to keep men of family out of small official life ? We should see them keeping lighthouses if it were not for the obloquy.”

“ And it would be still better than dependence.”

“ Yes, dearest, in a novel—in a three-volume thing from Mudie—so it would ; but real life is not half so accommodating. I'll talk to Gusty about this myself. And now, do tell me about yourself. Is there no engagement ? no fatal attachment that all this change of fortune has blighted ? Who is he, dearest ? tell me all ! You don't know what a wonderful creature I am for expedients. There never was the like of me for resources. I could always pull any one through a difficulty but myself.”

“ I am sorry I have no web to offer you for disentanglement.”

“ So then he has behaved well ; he has not deserted you in your change of fortune ? ”

“ There is really no one in the case,” said Nelly, laughing. “ No one to be either faithful or unworthy.”

“ Worse again, dearest. There is nothing so good at your age as an

unhappy attachment. A girl without a grievance always mopes ; and," added she, with a marked acuteness of look, "moping ages one quicker than downright grief. The eyes get a heavy expression, and the mouth drags at the corners, and the chin—isn't it funny, now, such a stolid feature as the chin should take on to worry us ?—but the chin widens and becomes square, like those Egyptian horrors in the Museum."

"I must look to that," said Nelly, gravely. "I'd be shocked to find my chin betraying me."

"And men are such wretches. There is no amount of fretting they don't exact from us ; but if we show any signs of it afterwards,—any hard lines about the eyes, or any patchiness of colour in the cheek,—they cry out, 'Isn't she gone off ?' That's their phrase, 'Isn't she gone off ?'"

"How well you understand ; how well you read them ?"

"I should think I do ; but after all, dearest, they have very few devices ; if it wasn't that they can get away, run off to the clubs and their other haunts, they would have no chance with us. See how they fare in country-houses, for instance. How many escape there ! What a nice stuff your dress is made of !"

"It was very cheap."

"No matter ; it's English. That's the great thing here. Any one can buy a 'gros.' What one really wants is a nameless texture and a neutral tint. You must positively walk with me on the Pincian in that dress. Roman men remark everything. You'll not be ten minutes on the promenade till every one will know whether you wear two buttons on your gloves or three."

"How odious !"

"How delightful ! Why, my dear child, for whom do we dress ? Not for each other ; no more than the artists of a theatre act or sing for the rest of the company. Our audience is before us ; not always a very enlightened or cultivated one, but always critical. There, do look at that stupid groom ; see how he suffers my horse to lag behind : the certain way to have him kicked by the other ; and I should die, I mean really die if anything happened to Ben Azir. By the way how well our parson rides. I declare I like him better in the saddle than in the pulpit. They rave here about the way he jumps the ox-fences. You must say 'tant des choses' for me, to him and his sister, whom I fear I have treated shamefully. I was to have had her to dinner one day, and I forgot all about it ; but she didn't mind, and wrote me the prettiest note in the world. But I always say, it is so easy for people of small means to be good-tempered. They have no jealousies about going here or there ; no heart-burnings that such a one's lace is Brussels point, and much finer than their own. Don't you agree with me ? There, I knew it would come to that. He's got the snaffle out of Ben Azir's mouth, and he's sure to break away."

"That gentleman apparently has come to the rescue. See, he has dismounted to set all to rights."

"How polite of him. Do you know him, dear ?"

"No. I may have seen him before. I'm so terribly short-sighted, and this glass does not suit me; but I must be going. I suppose I had better thank that strange man, hadn't I? Oh, of course, dearest, you would be too bashful; but I'm not. My old governess, Madame de Forgoon, used to say that English people never knew how to be bashful; they only looked culpable. And I protest she was right."

"The gentleman is evidently waiting for your gratitude; he is standing there still."

"What an observant puss it is," said Lady Augusta, kissing her. "Tell Gusty to come and see me. Settle some day to come in and dine, and bring the parson: he's a great favourite of mine. Where have I dropped my gauntlet? Oh, here it is. Pretty whip, isn't it? A present, a sort of a love-gift from an old Russian prince, who wanted me to marry him; and I said I was afraid; that I heard Russians knouted their wives. And so he assured me I should have the only whip he ever used, and sent me this. It was neat, or rather, as Dumas says, 'La plaisirerie n'était pas mal pour un Cossaque.' Good-by, dearest, good-by."

So actually exhausted was poor Nelly by the rattling impetuosity of Lady Augusta's manner, her sudden transitions, and abrupt questionings, that, when Julia entered the room, and saw her lying back in a chair, wearied-looking and pale, she asked—

"Are you ill, dear?"

"No; but I am actually tired. Lady Augusta has been an hour here, and she has talked till my head turned."

"I feel for you sincerely. She gave me one of the worst headaches I ever had, and then made my illness a reason for staying all the evening here to bathe my temples."

"That was good-natured, however."

"So I'd have thought, too, but that she made George always attend her with the ice and the eau-de-cologne, and thus maintained a little ambulant flirtation with him, that, sick as I was, almost drove me mad."

"She means nothing, I am certain, by all these levities, or, rather, she does not care what they mean; but here come our brothers, and I am eager for news, if they have any."

"Where's George?" asked Julia, as Augustus entered alone.

"Sir Marcus Something caught him at the gate, and asked to have five minutes with him."

"That means putting off dinner for an hour at least," said she, half pettishly. "I must go and warn the cook."

CHAPTER XLVII.

A PROPOSAL IN FORM.

WHEN Sir Marcus Cluff was introduced into L'Estrange's study, his first care was to divest himself of his various "wraps," a process not very unlike that of the *Hamlet* gravedigger. At length, he arrived at a suit of

entire chamois-leather, in which he stood forth like an enormous frog, and sorely pushed the parson's gravity in consequence.

"This is what Hazeldean calls the 'chest-sufferer's true cuticle.' Nothing like leather, my dear sir, in pulmonic affections. If I'd have known it earlier in life, I'd have saved half of my left lung, which is now hopelessly hepatalized."

L'Estrange looked compassionate, though not very well knowing what it was he had pity for.

"Not," added the invalid hastily, "that even this constitutes a grave constitutional defect. Davies says in his second volume that among the robust men of England you would not find one in twenty without some lingular derangement. He percussed me all over, and was some time before he found out the blot." The air of triumph in which this was said showed L'Estrange that he too might afford to look joyful.

"So that, with this reservation, sir, I do consider I have a right to regard myself, as Borcas pronounced me, sound as a roach."

"I sincerely hope so."

"You see, sir, I mean to be frank with you. I descend to no concealments."

It was not very easy for L'Estrange to understand this speech, or divine what especial necessity there was for his own satisfaction as to the condition of Sir Marcus Cluff's viscera; he, however, assented in general terms to the high esteem he felt for candour and openness.

"No, my dear Mr. L'Estrange," resumed he, "without this firm conviction—a sentiment based on faith and the stethoscope together—you had not seen me here this day."

"The weather is certainly trying," said L'Estrange.

"I do not allude to the weather, sir; the weather is, for the season, remarkably fine weather; there was a mean temperature of 68° Fahrenheit during the last twenty-four hours. I spoke of my pulmonary condition, because I am aware people are in the habit of calling me consumptive. It is the indiscriminating way ignorance treats a very complex question; and when I assured you that without an honest conviction that organic mischief had not proceeded far, I really meant what I said when I told you you would not have seen me here this day."

Again was the parson mystified, but he only bowed.

"Ah, sir," sighed the other, "why will not people be always candid and sincere? And when shall we arrive at the practice of what will compel—actually compel sincerity? I tell you, for instance, I have an estate worth so much—house property here, and shares in this or that company—but there are mortgages, I don't say how much, against me; I have no need to say it. You drive down to the Registration Office and you learn to a shilling to what extent I am liable. Why not have the same system for physical condition, sir? Why can't you call on the College of Physicians, or whatever the body be, and say, 'How is Sir Marcus Cluff? I'd like to know about that right auricle of his heart.'

What about his pancreas? Don't you perceive the inestimable advantage of what I advise?"

"I protest, sir, I scarcely follow you. I do not exactly see how I have the right, or to what extent I am interested, to make this inquiry."

"You amaze—you actually amaze me!" and Sir Marcus sat for some seconds contemplating the object of his astonishment. "I come here, sir, to make an offer for your sister's hand—"

"Pardon my interrupting, but I learn this intention only now."

"Then you didn't read my note. You didn't read the 'turn over.'"

"I'm afraid not. I only saw what referred to the church."

"Then, sir, you missed the most important; had you taken the trouble to turn the page, you would have seen that I ask your permission to pay my formal attentions to Miss L'Estrange. It was with intention I first discussed and dismissed a matter of business; I then proceeded to a question of sentiment, premising that I held myself bound to satisfy you regarding my property, and my pulmonary condition. Mind, body, and estate, sir, are not coupled together ignorantly, nor inharmoniously; as you know far better than me,—mind, body, and estate," repeated he, slowly. "I am here to satisfy you on each of them."

"Don't you think, Sir Marcus, that there are questions which should possibly precede these?"

"Do you mean Miss L'Estrange's sentiments, sir?" George bowed, and Sir Marcus continued: "I am vain enough to suppose I can make out a good case for myself. I look more, but I'm only forty-eight, forty-eight on the twelfth September. I have twenty-seven thousand pounds in bank stock—stock, mind you,—and three thousand four hundred a year in land, Norfolk property. I have a share—we'll not speak of it now—in a city house; and what's better than all, sir, not sixpence of debt in the world. I am aware your sister can have no fortune, but I can afford myself, what the French call a caprice, though this ain't a caprice, for I have thought well over the matter, and I see she would suit me perfectly. She has nice gentle ways, she can be soothing without depression, and calm without discouragement. Ah, that is the secret of secrets! She gave me my drops last evening with a tenderness, a graceful sympathy, that went to my heart. I want that, sir—I need it, I yearn for it. Simpson said to me years ago, 'Marry, Sir Marcus, marry! yours is a temperament that requires study and intelligent care. A really clever woman gets to know a pulse to perfection; they have a finer sensibility, a higher organization, too, in the touch.' Simpson laid great stress on that; but I have looked out in vain, sir. I employed agents; I sent people abroad; I advertised in *The Times*—M. C. was in the second column—for above two years; and with a correspondence that took two clerks to read through and minute. All to no end! All in vain! They tell me the really competent people never do reply to an advertisement; that one must look out for them oneself, make private personal inquiry. Well, sir, I did that, and I got into some unpleasant scrapes with it, and two actions for breach of

promise : two thousand pounds the last cost me, though I got my verdict, sir ; the Chief Baron very needlessly recommending me, for the future, to be cautious in forming the acquaintance of ladies, and to avoid widows as a general rule. These are the pleasantries of the Bench, and doubtless they amuse the junior bar. I declare to you, sir, in all seriousness, I'd rather that a man should give me a filip on the nose than take the liberty of a joke with me. It is the one insufferable thing in life." This sally had so far excited him that it was some minutes ere he recovered his self-possession. "Now, Mr. L'Estrange," said he, at last, "I bind you in no degree—I pledge you to nothing ; I simply ask leave to address myself to your sister. It is what lawyers call a 'motion to show cause why.' "

"I perceive that," broke in L'Estrange ; "but even that much I ought not to concede without consulting my sister and obtaining her consent. You will allow me therefore time."

"Time, sir ! My nerves must not be agitated. There can be no delays. It was not without a great demand on my courage, and a strong dose of chlorodine—Japp's preparation—that I made this effort now. Don't imagine I can sustain it much longer. No, sir, I cannot give time."

"After all, Sir Marcus, you can scarcely suppose that my sister is prepared for such a proposition."

"Sir, they are always prepared for it. It never takes them unawares. I have made them my study for years, and I do think I have some knowledge of their way of thinking and acting. I'll lay my life on it, if you will go and say, 'Maria'" —

"My sister's name is Julia," said the other, dryly.

"It may be, sir—I said 'Maria' generically, and I repeat it—' Maria, there is in my study at this moment a gentleman, of irreproachable morals and unblemished constitution, whose fortune is sufficiently ample to secure many comforts and all absolute necessaries, who desires to make you his wife ; ' her first exclamation will be, 'It is Sir Marcus Cluff.' "

"It is not impossible," said L'Estrange, gravely.

"The rest, sir, is not with you, nor even with me. Do me, then, the great favour to bear my message."

Although seeing the absurdity of the situation, and vaguely forecasting the way Julia might possibly hear the proposition, L'Estrange was always so much disposed to yield to the earnestness of any one who persisted in a demand, that he bowed and left the room.

"Well, George, he has proposed ?" cried Julia, as her brother entered the room, where she sat with Nelly Bramleigh.

He nodded only, and the two girls burst out into a merry laugh.

"Come, come, Julia," said he, reprovingly. "Absurd as it may seem, the man is in earnest, and must be treated with consideration."

"But tell us the whole scene. Let us have it all as it occurred."

"I'll do nothing of the kind. It's quite enough to say that he declares he has a good fortune, and wishes to share it with you, and I

think the expression of that wish should secure him a certain deference and respect."

"But who refuses, who thinks of refusing him all the deference and respect he could ask for? Not I, certainly. Come now, like a dear good boy, let us hear all he said, and what you replied. I suspect there never was a better bit of real-life comedy. I only wish I could have had a part in it."

"Not too late yet, perhaps," said Nelly, with a dry humour. "The fifth act is only beginning."

"That is precisely what I am meditating. George will not tell me accurately what took place in his interview, and I think I could not do better than go and learn Sir Marcus' sentiments for myself."

She arose and appeared about to leave the room when L'Estrange sprang towards the door, and stood with his back against it.

"You're not serious, Ju?" cried he, in amazement.

"I should say very serious. If Sir Marcus only makes out his case, as favourably as you, with all your bungling, can't help representing it, why—all things considered, eh, Nelly? *you*, I know, agree with me—I rather suspect the proposition might be entertained."

"Oh, this is too monstrous. It is beyond all belief," cried L'Estrange. And he rushed from the room in a torrent of passion, while Julia sank back in a chair, and laughed till her eyes ran over with tears of merriment.

"How could you, Julia! Oh, how could you!" said Nelly, as she leaned over her and tried to look reproachful.

"If you mean, how could I help quizzing him? I can understand you; but I could not. No, Nelly, I could not. It is my habit to seize on the absurd side of any embarrassment; and you may be sure there is always one if you only look for it; and you've no idea how much pleasanter—ay, and easier too—it is to laugh oneself out of difficulties than to grieve over them. You'll see George, now, will be spirited up, out of pure fright, to do what he ought: to tell this man that his proposal is an absurdity, and that young women, even as destitute of fortune as myself, do not marry as nursetenders. There! I declare that is Sir Marcus driving away already. Only think with what equanimity I can see wealth and title taking leave of me. Never say after that that I have not courage."

Recollections of Gibson the Sculptor.

I WAS introduced to John Gibson by an English lady who had known him for some years. It was on a bright day of a Roman February that I turned, from the Via Babuino, into the little by-street called Via Fontanella in which was his studio.

The first room opening upon the street contained duplicates of a great many of his works. I saw copies in marble of his "Aurora," his "Wounded Amazon," his "Flora," of his two famous bassi-relievi, "Phæton driving the Chariot of the Sun," "The Hours leading the Horses of the Sun," &c. &c., and plaster casts of others crowded together, with some relics of Wyatt and of another sculptor, a protégé of Gibson's, who had died in Rome some years ago.

After going across a small garden full of pale winter roses and spring violets, and with a fern-veiled fountain in the centre, we entered the room in which he was at that moment working. He was modelling a monumental basso-relievo. I was struck then on this our first meeting, as I always was afterwards, whenever I saw him, with the combination of three distinctive and usually antagonistic qualities in his manner and bearing: extreme simplicity, blended with acute shrewdness and resolute firmness.

In person he was very handsome; of middle height and well-knit figure. The head was well placed on the shoulders, and the feet and hands were in good proportion. The medallion cast I have of his profile is beautiful. The features are regular and noble, the chin strong and firm, the eyes deep-set, the brow straight, not very high, but full over the temples, and projecting slightly over the eyes. The face itself was intellectual and expressive. Gibson had longed from his earliest years to be a sculptor and to go to Rome. He fulfilled both wishes. No life professed more unity of purpose; no life more strenuously carried out its profession. The study of sculpture as a classic art, and carrying out the result of such study in his work, were the alpha and omega of his being. He was intelligent and upright; but his one creed in religion and his one code in morals were belief in, and devotion to, art. His whole life was spent as a votary of that faith. He has often told me that he had been in youth a docile and obedient lad, with no desire to break established routine in anything; but it was literally impossible for him to pursue the trade to which he had been apprenticed. He left it and he might have been imprisoned for breaking his indentures, but fortunately his master was of milder or more sympathetic nature than others of his class, and through the kind interest

of Roscoe, the historian and true follower of the mediæval Mæcenæs, Lorenzo de' Medici, he was enabled to leave his first calling, and to apply himself to his true vocation.

He had a good many friends in his youth among medical students. His anatomical studies led him into their society, and he used to say that his marvellous knowledge of the proportions and muscular development of the human figure was chiefly acquired in the dissecting-rooms he frequented with them. There was a difficulty in procuring subjects for dissection at that time, so that medical students were often employed themselves, or employed others, in procuring dead bodies for that purpose.

I have heard him tell, with simple and graphic force, anecdotes of this period of his life which might have been worked up by Edgar Poe into awful and fear-inspiring romances. One of these stories he told with great tenderness. He and some of his friends had obtained the right, by payment of a considerable sum, of disinterring the corpse of a person who had lately died in a hospital. They went to the churchyard at night and dug up the coffin. No particulars of the sex or age of the corpse had been given. It was a bright moonlight night, and when the lid was removed a beautiful young woman was discovered beneath the pauper's shroud. She had been too lately buried for death to alter her beauty, and she lay before them so white and lovely, with her smooth hair braided over her forehead and hanging down round the delicate throat, that these wild youths were awed. "We stood quite still looking at her," he said, "and then, without a word, the coffin was closed and we lowered it into the ground again. We had not spoken a syllable, but we all had felt alike that it was impossible to touch her." I fancy I have traced some shadowy recollection of this incident on one of his monumental bassi-relievi. He used to tell another story which he called a ghost-story, whenever the conversation turned on apparitions or spectres. I heard him tell this one at Knebworth to Lord Lytton (he was then Sir Edward) and to Mr. Forster. The story dated at the time he was apprenticed to a chimney-piece carver and manufacturer. It was the custom in this establishment for one of the young men employed in the manufactory to sleep in the warehouse every night. They took it by turns to do so, week by week. The yard and ground-floor offices were encumbered by pieces of marble and masses of stone, chimney-pieces and other specimens of work, and the property was too valuable to be left unguarded. The person left in charge slept on the first floor.

The night that was to commence Gibson's week of guard, some of his surgeon friends had asked him to deposit in the warehouse, a coffin which had been exhumed for the purposes of dissection. It was a good place of concealment. The superstitious horror of the practice of dissection was at its fever height at that moment. The name of resurrectionist was equivalent to that of murderer. It was a service of peril to obtain a body for anatomical purposes. The transfer of the body or coffin, when disin-

tered, from the grave to the surgeon's operating-room, was always attended with risk, and was generally performed with the greatest secrecy and by the most indirect road. This coffin was to be placed in concealment for the night in the warehouse, and by earliest dawn it was to be taken to the surgeon's. It had been brought in late at night, and was stowed away among the marble and stone fragments. Before Gibson went to bed he made his rounds, armed as usual, and examined well the yard and ground-floor of the warehouse, and found all in order. The blocks of marble and stone, the finished and unfinished work, lay around him, heaped up in apparent disorder, but arranged, nevertheless, in a certain method evident to an accustomed observer. When he went to bed he was more wakeful than usual, and lay on his pillow looking through the window opposite his bed, at the bright full moon filling his room with clear white light. At last, the stillness and the radiance became oppressive. His thoughts turned to the corpse in the warehouse below, as silent and as cold as the inanimate stone around it. Was it in truth so? What if it were less motionless than he supposed it to be? What if the spirit which had once animated it should come to expostulate with the sacrilegious persons who had disturbed it, and avenge itself on the one left with it? His imagination, once roused in this direction, played traitor, as it always does, and added to his fears. He fancied he heard stealthy steps coming up the stairs. Twice he thought he heard the door of his room open. He sat up in bed breathlessly awaiting the entrance of something or some one. He mistook the folds of the curtains for a spectral creature in white floating towards him. He was sensible enough to feel that he was the victim of optical delusions, but his heart beat and his breath came short, as if, beyond and beside that terror which he was conscious was self-created, some presence intangible and invisible to his senses shared with him the solitude of the place, pervading it from garret to basement. While he thus remained almost paralysed with fright, there suddenly sounded from below a report like the rending open of a rock: at another short interval was another, and again another. He confessed he was fairly overcome with fear. He drew the bed-clothes over his head, and was for a few minutes insensible. When he was again conscious the moon had set, it was quite dark, and the darkness gradually renewed his sinking courage.

He reasoned himself into calmness, struck a light, dressed himself, and went downstairs. All was barred and shut as he had left it, but on glancing towards the coffin, he became aware that it had been pushed or had slipped from its place on a block of marble. It had been put down hastily and carelessly, and very little force was needed to topple it over. In falling, an enormous mass which was heaved in front of it and had been standing upright, had been pushed off its balance, and had fallen first on some pieces of stone, which, unable to bear its weight, had slipped from under it, and left it prostrate.

These were the effects he beheld, but what was the cause? He explored in and out the labyrinth of stone-heaps, his one candle projecting uncanny shadows as he moved about: at last he spied the bright wild eyes of a cat, shining like red carbuncles under a ledge of stone. The cat was the ghost. Curious about the coffin, the creature had pushed at it, till it had displaced it and caused the overthrow of the stone and marble.

Gibson always called this his ghost-story; it was vain to tell him it had nought to do with the name. He was persistent that it was a ghost-story, though there was no ghost in it. I must own he told it most graphically, and the frank confession of fear was worthy of so resolute a man as he always proved himself to be.

Though he was nearly fifty years in Rome, he never lost his thoroughly English look. He was liked by his workmen, and Signor Giovanni was a power among scarpellini and formatori. He often described to me his life in the early years he spent in Rome. To him, for the pursuit of art, there was no other city in the world. He remained there winter and summer, and he maintained that he had not found it unhealthy. "With care,—yes, yes,—with care it was not unhealthy." He always sprinkled his assertions with a very decisive "yes," reiterated in a dry incisive tone and with a firm closing of the lips which was very characteristic. He was very intimate with Lady Davy (Sir Humphry's widow), and he has often described to me their early walks on the Pincian Hill in summer, between four and five in the morning, and his quietly remaining in his studio all day till the heat was over, and never stirring out while the dews were falling. During the early period of his residence in Rome, Canova and Thorwaldsen were also in the Immortal City. He always acknowledged his obligations to Canova, through whose generous introduction he gained his first commission. Gibson has been styled by some the English Canova; but with equal classical purity of type, there is much more vigour in the Englishman than in the Italian. Gibson's "Hunter and Dog" are Greek in beauty and animated life, but there is a severe strength and energy about the figure which attest the Anglo-Saxon fibre in the imagination of the sculptor. Thorwaldsen and he were friends, and many of his most interesting reminiscences were of evenings spent with him at Miss Mackenzie's, the lady who was for a short time engaged to Thorwaldsen. "She was so kind to us all," Gibson used to say; "she was so intelligent and so good. They were golden evenings, and yet nothing could be more primitive than the lodging or ruder than the accommodation. She used to sit on a box while we two occupied the only chairs the apartment boasted of, but never have I spent pleasanter or more cordial evenings than these."

Gibson has been sometimes accused of worldliness and tuft-hunting. The accusation was unjust. He looked upon the rich and noble but in one light—as patrons of art. Sculpture, to be carried to its highest

expression required the support of money, and it was in the interests of art that a wealthy class should exist. Galleries for pictures and statues, splendid decorations, costly monuments, were part of the appanage of historic families, and from them must necessarily come the patronage which enabled an artist to clothe in marble his ideal dreams. These were Gibson's ideas, and the full extent of them. It will be difficult to adduce any instance, in which he allowed himself to be swayed in opinion or theory as to art, to please or flatter the noblest or wealthiest in the land. When the present Duke of Wellington did not agree with him in his interpretation of the fable of Pandora, and wished him to alter some accessories in the statue for which he had given him a commission, Gibson was obdurate. He wrote that his Grace was quite at liberty *not* to take the statue he had ordered, but that he, as an artist, could not alter his conception of what was the proper pose and correct gesture of the figure. Lady Marian Alford purchased it finally. He was equally indifferent to the criticism of newspapers. At the time that the press were very bitter in their attacks on his statue of Sir Robert Peel, he told me his friends were anxious that he should not see the newspapers. "Oh, let them bark," he said. "The statue is on its pedestal, and the 4,000 guineas are in my pocket." But to suggestions from those whose artistic knowledge he respected, he was always attentive, and sometimes yielded to their judgment in preference to his own. But it was necessary that they should be adepts in the mysteries of which he was a master.

He was not, as may be supposed from his birth and early condition in life, an educated man; but his brother was a scholar, and as he lived with him for many years, Gibson thus acquired a certain portion of classical knowledge. It was almost touching to hear how his poetical imagination revelled in the beautiful Greek legends. He used to speak of them as if to all they were as new and as vivid as to himself. In his keen sensibility to beauty of form and power of portraying it, this Welshman, lowly born and little cultivated as he was, might have been a Greek himself. There are twelve drawings of a dancer, studies he made from Cerito, which will explain what I mean. The bounding grace, the divine ecstasy of motion in a thoroughly well-poised and beautiful form, animated by the joyous spirit of youth, are admirably portrayed in the various attitudes of the figure delineated in these sketches.

This reminds me of an anecdote he used to relate, how he had stopped the mouth of some vulgar person, who chose to think that, because he or she was admitted to the studio, he might criticize the works he was allowed to see to the artist. "Mr. Gibson, your figure of the dancing-girl is very beautiful; but there is surely an error in it?" "Yes?" "Her feet and ankles are too small and slender. It is a well-known fact that professional dancers have large feet and thick ankles. Over-exertion of the muscles—eh?" "Yes, sir; but my dancing-girl is *not* professional. She does not dance for hire. The rule does not hold good with her, for

she—yes, she dances for her own pleasure, and does *not* over-exert her muscles."

His opinions about Rome and the Romans were peculiar, and would be unpopular just now. Rome, he said, should be left to art. "It is good for nothing else; and for what better purpose could it exist? It has had its political and religious supremacy; now, let it keep its artistic superiority." He wished it to be better governed; but he had not a lofty opinion of the people. Physically, their grace and their beauty attracted him; but their lawlessness, their childish violence, their pitiful cheats were repulsive to his nature. He saw them as they were, without any hallucination from political ambition or enthusiasm.

His most beautiful model, Grazia, was the frequent subject of his conversation. Her sordid avarice, her fierce chastity, her furious temper, were studies to him; and the contrast which her moral nature presented to her beauty, was graphically described. He told me once that to pacify this wild panther of a woman he had uttered the only deliberate lie he was conscious of since his mother, a stern Puritan, had flogged him at three years old for uttering some falsehood about an apple. An English lady who had often heard of Grazia's marvellous beauty, asked permission to see her as she was sitting for her bust to Gibson. The lady looked at her and said she was handsome, but that her expression was bad. "She looks as if she had a vile temper." Grazia did not understand the words, but she read from the expression that it was something unfavourable. She started up. "Signor Giovanni, that woman has insulted me, I know. What did she say? Tell her *I* am a Roman, and that *she* is a miserable foreigner. Tell me what she said, or I will go and never return." "She said you were very beautiful, Grazia." "What else?" "What else could she say?" Grazia believed in him implicitly and was satisfied. He said she was quite capable of personally maltreating the lady if he had said the truth.

I accompanied Gibson once to see Rachel. He did not understand French, but the gestures, the tragic intensity, the classic beauty of the great actress enchanted him. Her wonderful by-play, the manner in which she listened, stood, and moved, were delightful to him. He was very critical on female dresses. He wished women to wear drapery, as in the classic age,—a sheet fastened by a button on the shoulder, and hair pulled low down over the brows. My memory is full of anecdotes and sayings of his. To me he was always a most interesting study. The artists of to-day are either men of the world, gentlemen of fashion and position, luxurious in habits, and refined to Sybaritism in their mode of living, or Bohemians *pur et simple*. Gibson was as hardy and as frugal as if he had never left his Welsh hills, and yet as orderly and thoroughly correct as if he had been a respectable "gigman" in a thriving English town. The soft relaxations of that Circean clime were unknown to him. The subtle enervation to brain and moral fibre, which is almost inseparable from the pursuit of art,

was unfelt by him. His industry was remarkable. I was once eight years absent from Rome, and he showed me on my return eight statues which had been designed and modelled in that interval.

At six o'clock, summer and winter, the old man was always to be found taking an early cup of coffee in the Caffè Greco—the favourite resort of the artists in Rome. How they must miss him in that accustomed haunt! The genial smile, the keen bright eyes, the pithy speech, so familiar to all who frequented it, are indissolubly connected with that spot, and in any age but this—so forgetful of its dead fames,—pilgrimages would be made to the Caffè Greco by neophytes in the same career, for the sake of their hallowed and revered memories. For half-a-century he devoted himself day by day to his profession—to sculpture as he understood it, the representation of beauty. He did not attempt to make art a moral teacher. Indirectly it might become so, but it should have but one legitimate and direct aim—beauty. What it might suggest was beyond and beside this. It depended on the eye that saw, and not on the hand that wrought.

The legacy of his life's earnings to the Royal Academy has been blamed by some, but I think the blame unjust. He did not wrong his own family by this generosity to art. Art was his wife, his child, his family. To bequeath to future students the lesson of an artist's life, laborious effort, and successful achievement, seems to me an honourable aim and a worthy result.

Notes on National Characteristics in the Scottish Lowlands.

In no country perhaps, taking into consideration its small size, are to be observed so many different types of feature and form among its inhabitants as in Scotland. It is owing no doubt to the variety of peoples which have at one time either invaded or settled in the country ; but the tendency of the age is so decidedly to efface rather than to develope distinctions of race and character, that it is surprising this diversity should not have died out more extensively. On the decline of the Roman Empire, the south-east of Scotland was seized on by the Saxons and Angles, the Scots or Gaels from Ireland, otherwise Kelts, swarmed on the north and west, while the Scandinavians, Norsemen, Danes, and Frisians invaded and colonized the coast. And to this day we must still look for the Kelt in the Western Highlands, for the Scandinavian type as we approach the east or western shores, and for the Saxon, more or less pure, in the Lowlands. In the shires of Berwick, Roxburgh, Peebles, Dumfries, and the Lothians the farmers are an exceedingly fine lengthy breed of men, six feet to six feet three inches of stature being by no means uncommon. They have well-formed hands and feet, long thighs, are broad in the shoulder, but spare in flesh, and, unlike the English of the same class, they retain the last peculiarity in an advanced period of life. They are intelligent, cautious, prudent in their money affairs, and well educated ; and their labouring men are not very far behind them in their good qualities. Between them and the fishermen, or, as they are generally called, the fishers, there is in almost every point a marked difference.

In some measure springing from original difference of stock and blood, strengthened by the daily and hourly contemplation of examples in daring of a kind peculiarly stirring, deepened and intensified by precept and tradition, so are born and nurtured the characteristics which make the distinguishing features of our maritime population as compared with our inland people. Separated sometimes by a mile or two, sometimes only by a few hundred yards, the fishermen and the villagers dwell side by side yet apart—neighbours in the sense of contiguity, and which admits of a friendly exchange in the way of barter, but not neighbours in any sense which indicates a similarity of custom, sentiment, or social relationship. All along the coast of Cumberland, Northumberland, and on the east and west of Scotland there are clusters or little colonies of fishers, whose peculiar characteristics and wild isolated life and fashions are easily remarked, and present themselves in a striking and unvarying form. In

the *Bride of Lammermoor* we have Coldingham village and Coldingham shore ; in some places it is the town and the cove, or the high town and the fisher town. The men of Buckhaven differ from the men of Newhaven, who are supposed to have originally sprung from a set of Belgian settlers. They are a handsome race, especially the women, and as they marry almost entirely among themselves, and observe certain odd regulations of their own in such matters, they increase and prosper in spite of their isolation. A study of the manners and customs of a fisher village may not be without interest. Take one of the kind at random, composed say of thirty or forty men with their families, in this instance claiming to be of pure Danish stock. The cottages are generally built as near as possible to the sea and of rough-hewn stone, the walls being exceedingly deep and solid, so as to afford much warmth and shelter. They front to the land, as need is, on account of the violence of the storms. Often, by way of further precaution, they are arranged in the form of a square, the centre of which is the common receptacle for lobster-traps, buoys, and other fishing-gear, but the little porch and double door which so often form a portion of the north-country cottage, to add to the seclusion and comfort of the inmates, is rarely seen in the fisher's hut. The mortal stillness in the midday of the fisher village is the result of the circumstance that most of the men are in their beds, only a few women and one or two embryo fishers and fishwives of ten or twelve years of age peer out of the door at the passing stranger. The stinks (may the word be pardoned) are strong and various, the midden or ash-heap is handy and close to the door, and how dear that institution is to the heart of the Scotch there is no need to tell. Some years ago, when the cholera was approaching our shores, committees were appointed to see that proper sanitary regulations were observed, and of course the dunghill or midden was the first thing to be removed. One of the women in the village is related by Dean Ramsay to have thus addressed the M.P. who headed the committee,—“Noo, major, ye may tak' our lives, but ye'll no tak' our middens.”

Of the minor conveniences of life the fisher neither reckcs nor cares. The smells are mostly from the remains of putrid fish, and the grease and mixtures in which the nets are soaked. On one spot, the crest of a noble headland, there is a perfect mountain of remnants of cockles, periwinkles, and herrings, sending forth a most odious savour. Close to it, on a half barrel cut in the form of a chair, may be seen daily, when the sun shines, an old fisher dressed in his usual costume, the patriarch of the community, vaguely supposed to be in his one-hundredth year. His eyes are dim, and his weather-beaten face looks like a wrinkled mass of orange net-work. On the slopes to his right are spread the nets, scenting the air with their peculiar smell, and at his feet the fishy dead heated by the sun, but before him, for many a broad Scottish mile, lies the blue rippling sea, with a score or two of white sails on it ; and the strong fresh salt breeze is more than meat and drink to the old man, as he sits there, day after day, with that strange far-off gaze so often observable in the eyes of the aged, and

which suggests the idea that they do, however vaguely, realize in some sort the nearness of the silent and shadowy land whither their weary steps are turned. Swarms of red-cheeked, bold-eyed children play round him, sometimes swarthy as Spaniards, sometimes white-haired as if bleached by the sun, but he turns from their noisy childish play seawards, and as he watches the fishers spread their brown nets on the grass, silvered over with the scales of last night's draught of herrings, memories of his youth flit fitfully over his mind, and he talks to himself or gives his orders as he used to do when the gale was fresh, the rocks near, and the night dark. But more commonly he sits silent and motionless, and it would be hard to say whether his wistful gaze is indeed the yearning for the rest that is so near or the vacant and dimmed expression which tells of the dulled senses and fast dying faculties and memory of extreme old age.

All odours, however unsavoury, must needs enter by the doors of these cottages, since the small deep-set windows are rarely opened: they admit light only in a very moderate degree, and of ventilation none—at least so far as human care and foresight can provide against it. When the men are not busy with the fishing, they fetch coal in their own boats, buying it at a very low rate. If they are near the moors they can likewise procure turf on most reasonable terms, so that generally there are plenty of huge blocks of sea-coal in the outhouse, and a good stack of turf hard by. Few spots are warmer, cleaner, or more comfortable than the interior of a fisher's cottage towards evening—the three-cornered glass cupboard well stocked with china, and a blazing fire of coal and turf on the hearth, the lady of the house probably reading a romance of the stirring and supernatural order, of which these people are exceedingly fond. There are in each house sometimes two rooms, and a "but and a ben;" sometimes four rooms; but, however this may be, those who dwell within adhere to the time-honoured custom of sleeping in box-beds, and near the fire. A married couple may occupy another room, but the grandfather, grandchildren, widowed mother, &c. generally have the kitchen, and the other rooms are either let off, or spare nets, fish, coals, onions, &c. are stored there. To our ears this seems a disagreeable custom, and by no means a decent one, and with our habits it would be so, but the charge is not as well-founded as might be supposed, and the reason is simple enough. It is our practice to undress when we go to bed, and to strip and wash when we rise in the morning. With them a bed is simply a place for repose, and thither they retire with little more preparation than an Indian ayah when she coils herself up on her mat.

If the fisher is wet he changes his clothes in the morning for a dry suit of the same kind, kicks off his boots, and sleeps; his wife at night takes off her gown and shoes, possibly her stays, puts on what is known as a bed-gown, but which is a kind of loose jacket, and sleeps also; and if we were to inquire into the habits of the poor class of female domestics, it is probable we should find their *toilette de nuit* to be essentially the same. The fisher performs his ablutions mostly in the open air and on a Sunday

morning ; and the wife, like the housemaid, never dreams of "cleaning" herself until she has finished her dirty work. Now this may be, it perhaps is, inconvenient, but it can hardly be called indecent.

The perpetual contemplation of the ocean always affects the temperament and imagination of those who live near or on it, and still more so when the inland scenery is of a wild and mountainous character. Sometimes black moors flank the coast, shading off to a pale tender green, or striped with purple red clefts as they slope on to the shore, or a long range of heather-covered hills terminate in the steep dark crags of slate, stone, granite, or trap some hundreds of feet high, which hang almost perpendicularly over the water, at such points twenty feet deep even at low tide. To the north and south other peaks are visible, generally the site of ancient ruins of castle, abbey, or church, each the subject of a separate tale or legend. Often a chain of rocks runs so high and deep into the sea, that standing on it the waves roll past to the shore nearly a quarter of a mile off with such strength and swell that one feels out at sea rather than on the main land. Where the cliff is of red sandstone, as in some parts of Fifeshire, most curious and fantastically shaped archways formed by the long action of wind, rain, and sea, are very common, and detached columns full of crevices, which are the home of sea-birds and their young, stand upright in the water; the white gulls floating about on a sunny day in lazy enjoyment of their privileges form a pretty point in the picture, and here and there the black head of a seal or porpoise rises out of the water. If the fisher village lies near a red sandstone cliff the men never fail to make it useful : they tunnel it so as to make short cuts for themselves on a winter's night, burrow caves in it, or turn small caves into roomy caverns with strong bolted doors to keep all safe—very similar to the limestone caves used as wine-cellars, and even dwelling-houses, in some parts of Touraine. In these the fishers keep their fish, salt, nets, &c.—in former times probably their brandy and other smuggled goods. Very little contraband trade is carried on now, and the business of the coast-guardsmen is chiefly to assist in case of danger to vessels. They have also to see that certain regulations are carried out by the fishers with regard to their name and number being properly painted on each boat, for identification in case of need on disputes or quarrels with the French fishermen. Whether owing to this or to the memory of traditions not yet forgotten, there is sometimes a kind of *malaise* in the demeanour of the fishers towards the coast-guardsmen, and always a certain gravity and reticence in their intercourse. Almost every fisher village has its own little harbour in miniature, situated of course in the most sheltered situation, and if possible so that even at low tide the water should be deep enough to float their boats as far as that is consistent with their safety on a stormy winter's night. As evening approaches first one long slender fellow and then another will appear, either from the houses, or the sunny grassy corner where he has been lounging with his pipe : they make their way down to the boats, which they prepare for the night's work with great care and deli-

beration,—three men and two boys being the general complement to each boat. The particular colony described claims, as has been said, to be of pure Danish blood, and the men are generally tall and gracefully formed, the head high and long, the forehead prominent over the eyes but receding above, the nose generally aquiline, well cut, and strongly marked, a long thigh, high instep, small foot and ankle, and a remarkably free and elastic step. They have generally clear swarthy complexions, bushy whiskers, and mostly dark hair. Their costume is picturesque enough, consisting of dark blue knitted or woven shirt and trowsers, and a scarlet woollen cap, sugar-loaf shaped, and hanging down like a forage-cap. Some of the fishers are really fine specimens of masculine beauty, and the girls are often very handsome, with a proud eye and free and stately gait. As women, they retain their good features and comely looks; but in that class of life, where there is some toil and much exposure to the weather, the delicacy of female beauty is of a very fleeting character. First one boat and then another leaves the little port, and soon the sea is speckled over with them; the women almost invariably gathering in a group on the pier-wall to watch the men set out on their daily work, which is always one of incessant exertion and considerable peril. “It’s a parlous life,” said one fisher-wife; “if it cooms a coarse nicht, an’ they’re a’oot, we canna bide in oor beds, we just a’ gang doon to the pier-head an’ bide there each wife till she has gotten her ain mon hame again.” In religion these people are of a melancholy turn, and, to a certain degree, fatalists. For this reason, though the Presbyterian church is not unsuited to them, they prefer those sects which profess a more pronounced Calvinism, such as the United Presbyterians or particular Baptists, &c. A gentleman expressed his intention of accompanying the men in their boat next day. “If the Lord will,” rejoined a fisher-wife austerity; and another could find no better comfort to offer to a poor young fellow suffering severely from ague than this, “The old must die, but the young *may*.” The remark was made with such significant emphasis that it really sounded like a threat. As a rule, the men are more chaste in their lives, and less gross as regards animal gratifications, than the Lowlander of Saxon stock; they are disposed to excessive exertion of a spasmodic kind, to be followed by an interval of entire laziness; they are capable of an almost ascetic self-denial, but are apt to indemnify themselves by an occasional revel. Many of them are teetotallers six days out of the seven, and even when they are most busy in the herring-fishery, they often take with them no other drink than cold tea; but on the Saturday night these self-imposed rules are altogether in abeyance, and they make merry accordingly. Whisky affects their heads more easily than it disturbs their stomachs; they get sentimental, gay, quarrelsome, sing or fight, as the mood takes them; but the next morning they may all be seen washed and shaved, attired in the Sabbath suit of the Scottish peasant, *i.e.* black broadcloth from head to foot, lounging up to the church or chapel which they patronize. “I’ve little to do either with bringing the fishers into the

world or helping them out of it," said an able and intelligent medical man. "It's often a mere form my going down, the women are strong, and after childbirth they are about again in three or four days. The men mostly die of old age, except those that die by drowning. The sea-air keeps off fevers and other epidemics. They hardly ever have rheumatism, which is rather curious. Sometimes an odd case of overdrinking comes into my hands, but very rarely." Some of them speak two distinct dialects—the Lowland Scotch with their neighbours, in which, as usual, all words ending in *l* lose the final letter, and the consonants are left out in the middle of words; the other is perfectly good English, but the accent is something like that of a Highlander, or the brogue of an Irishman. This they use with strangers. They change from one to the other according to the person they address, but do not mix the two together. The boys mostly follow the calling of their fathers. If they emigrate, it is commonly to the United States, towards which the poorer class in Scotland turn as the middle classes look towards India; but, like the Irish, they are more prone to return than the English or German emigrant. "I wearied to come back, so that I may die among my own people by the shore," said an old man who had been knocking about on the other side of the world for thirty years as whaler, settler, gold-digger, &c. Occasionally, but not often, a fisher will marry a girl from the inland villages. This is more rare with the Newhaven men than any of the other colonies. This is looked on by her friends as a kind of virtual separation and a great change, but by no means for the worse. The life is an anxious one, hard and rough in some of its features, and few women not early inured to it can endure it. The wife, after seeing that her husband has on a dry suit, smothers him with clothes in his box-bed, goes up with a heavy creel of fish on her back to the nearest town or railway-station, and there makes her own market. She often sets and superintends the salmon-nets with the aid of one or two of the children, or helps to mend the fishing gear in winter. More than once it has been said that the fishers' wives have been up to the waist in the surf tugging at the ropes with their muscular arms, and bringing the boats to land by main strength when the men have by any casualty been exhausted and in need of assistance. On the other hand these men, in a good herring season, will often make from 80*l.* to 100*l.* The wife has always a servant of her own. She holds the purse and is treated with immense deference by her husband, who is, in fact, in considerable subjection, and submits to be dressed, rebuked, and advised by his wife. "The hoose is aye best guidet and the purse is aye largest when the wife rules ane and haud's tither," said a fishwife, boldly. The shy and respectful manner of these brave and hardy fellows not only with their own women, but with all women, is curious but certainly creditable;—the Irish and the Highlanders exhibit the same peculiarity, and the women are perfectly aware of it and act accordingly. I remember an innkeeper in Ayrshire telling me that he always waited on the farmers himself, but the wife and the daughters attended to the fishers. "When the farmers are

merry they no ken hoo to guide themselves wi' woman folk, they're ower muckle ceevil, or they're no ceevil eneugh ; and when the fishers are fou they canna guide themselves wi' men." This is very apparent on a Saturday night at any of the little inns on the coast, frequented by fishers, when the men are in a humour for a spree. From one to two dozen of them lounge in and seat themselves in the taproom, which is especially consecrated to their use, and the calls for whisky are very brisk. For a time all goes quietly. There is plenty of music, the songs are generally of a sentimental kind, and often contain as many as fourteen or fifteen verses ; indeed, the length of them is only exceeded by the strength of voice and lung of those who sing them,—the upper notes in particular are prolonged and sustained in a fashion almost trying to hear. "Annie Laurie," and "Ye Banks and Braes," are especial favourites, and never fail to bring down thunders of applause ; this is indicated by beating the tables with their hands, jingling their glasses, and stamping on the wooden floor with their nailed boots. If one man tires another takes up the song. "The Earl of Huntingtower," and a ballad called "The Pirate of the Isles," I have heard sung, as the Ephesians sang of Diana, "for the space of several hours." One ballad pleased my ear ; it is a wild and melancholy air set in a minor key,—"The Plaidie that the Winds blew awa'." The burden of the song is the unhappy fate of a young girl who had loved a false laddie too well, and trusted him too far, and when in shame and in sorrow she repaired to the trysting-tree on the bleak moor, and went in vain, she drew her hood over her head, sat down, and there died. Her body was found in the drift when the winter's snow melted ; but her honour and her life "had gone wi' the plaidie that the winds blew awa'!" At the expiration of a couple of hours signs of uproar begin to be heard, the perpetual jingling of the bell indicates frequent supplies of whisky, a dozen men are roaring out a dozen different songs, in different keys, with great steadfastness and force ; then there are shouts, blows, smashing of glass. "I'll fecht ye." (*Woman's voice*)—"Saundie, ye'll no fight here." "We're ganging oot." "Ye'll no gang till ye've paid the aughteenpence." Then a fearful scrimmage, and the two combatants turn out on to the road, followed by half-a-dozen of the least sober. The mistress of the house, or the daughter or servant-girl (the master has retired to his bed, and sleeps the sleep of the just), darts forward fearlessly to "steek" the door after them, and as she does so, there are long arms thrust forward to protect her from the weight and crush of those who are pressing on from behind. "Thank ye, Maggie, my lass—door's steeked." And on this announcement the rest retire like sheep back to the tap, as men convinced that further efforts are useless. As soon as they have settled down to their pipes, glass, and song again, Maggie quietly unbars the door, and those outside who have cooled their blood by a short fight re-enter with a somewhat subdued air. Some years ago it was not uncommon for the gathering to include half-a-dozen of the crew of a French fishing-boat, and the "Marseillaise" and "Partant pour la Syrie" mingled with "Ye Banks and Braes." No man

understood what his neighbour said or sung ; but they were cordial all the same. However, recent regulations as to the fishing boundaries of the two nations and the mode of settling disputes have, it is alleged, caused some little jealousy and unpleasant feeling, and possibly owing to this the French boats rarely approach the coast with any intention of going ashore. One October night, many years ago, I was smoking my pipe along the road outside one of these little inns, and listening with some amusement to the turmoil within. It wanted only about an hour to closing time, but it was clear moonlight, and from where I stood I could see the dim outline of petticoats on the dark side of the road, and soon ascertained that they were fishers' wives come to re-conduct their husbands home. With the wise intuition of their sex they did not court certain defeat by entering the house, or proclaiming their presence, but continued without, discussing their home affairs with the calm tone of decision appropriate to those who rule.

Diminutive women are notoriously the most enterprising and courageous, and at last the smallest among them went to the door, and demanded, "Is Saundie frae the shore here ?" A shrill voice re-echoed the call, "Saundie frae the shore, ane wants ye."

"I'll nae gang."

"Gang oot and speak till her, Saundie, or she'll mak' your hoose het for ye."

Saundie went out, violently impelled from behind by a friendly shove —a fisher, standing six feet and more in his stockings. Then followed a little conjugal dispute. At first he bade her "gang hame," and tried to elude her grasp ; she threatened a very little and coaxed a good deal, and there were evident signs of giving way on the part of Saundie. At length she prevailed, and led away her giant in triumph, passing the other women in silence, as though feeling a compassion for their want of enterprise and administrative power. He stood still and looked back like Lot's wife, and more than once, as the renewed bursts of revelry struck on his ear, he made a desperate effort to escape, but she clung to him tenaciously : "Dinna cast your een back, Saundie, or ye'll no win hame wi' me the nicht," I heard her say, and then they vanished altogether in the darkness down to the shore.

With the harvest season come the reapers, or, as the Scotch call them, shearers, from the sister island, and scores of Irishmen are seen on the high roads, haunting the cheap lodging-houses, or sleeping in the barns in gangs when they get work with the farmers. According to anthropologists there are three kinds of Celts, the dolichocephalous and the brachycephalous—two dominant types, chiefly met with in the North and West Highlands—and a third, of a less prepossessing kind, to be met with everywhere, but mostly in the west of Ireland. Every one will recognize the portrait. Stature low ; long, low and broad head ; black coarse hair ; small dark or grey eyes, with fiery lustre ; receding forehead, lower part of the face prominent, broad short nose, and short bent legs ;

fierce and cunning in temper, fond of hoarding money, very industrious when clear gain is before them, otherwise lazy and indisposed for work. Of this type the Irish harvesters principally consist. As may be supposed the severity with which the Sabbath is observed is a severe trial of temper to these men, who live literally from hand to mouth, and are, in the sight of the Scotch, little more than wandering and benighted Papists. In the inland counties at this season a little roadside inn is sometimes literally besieged by them on a Sunday morning. They charter a truck in the Government train, in gangs of thirty or forty, and make their way immediately to the nearest public-house, many of them already intoxicated; for the worst of whisky is that, unlike beer, it can be bottled up over-night. As soon as they descry the desired haven they make a dead stop, and it is curious to see their amazement and incredulity when they find the door barred and bolted against them and all refreshment ruthlessly refused. They consult together and knock loudly. The landlord, warned by experience, vouchsafes no reply and keeps out of sight. They coax and blarney, they swear and blaspheme, to no effect; and to see the light in their small fierce eyes, and the working of their mouths, it is evident that their patience is failing fast. If they only knew, perhaps a quiet application at the back door might procure them a loaf of bread and a drink of beer; for the Scotch are not inhospitable, only they like to be respectable, especially on the Sabbath. But this the Irish do not know; and after some time those who are sober become convinced of the hopelessness of their efforts, so they take up their bundles and reaping-hooks and toil along the lane, after cursing the people, the religion, the Sabbath, and in particular the landlord, but leaving six or eight of the most drunken behind them. These take up their station at the door, on which they commence a monotonous battering and kicking. They might indeed break in at the window, but that course never seems to occur to their confused senses; the door, the open door, is to them the symbol of the public-house, and at it first one and then another continues to pound unavailingly. The rest sit down on the ground and place the house in a state of siege. From time to time they quarrel and fight, but as they are hardly able to stand up, that amusement does not last long. Fortunately they treat their sickles as sacred instruments, and always lay them carefully aside before they engage in combat, whatever may be their provocation. "It's not inside o' me to quarrel with any man living or dead, and I'll fight any man that will tell me it is," one observes emphatically. "By St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin it's an accursed countrhy," replies his companion. "Not like ould Ireland anyhow." (Weeps.) A third rises to depart, the two others accompany him for a few yards—they all embrace. "I love ye, Pether," says one, "and I'll never leave you nor forsake ye." They go along the lane for a few hundred yards. It ends by their all coming back again and encamping as before.

But all confusion, uproar, and revelry culminate at one period, and when Celt meets Celt then comes the tug of war. During the herring-

fishing there are a large number of supplementary hands employed : landsmen, or dalesmen as they are called, mostly in fact Highlanders, tall powerful fellows representing the other types of the Celt. These men are well paid, and of course assist in the celebration of the close of the herring-fishing, which is not a dry-lipped season. It generally occurs in the early part of September, exactly when the harvest is begun and the Irish most abound. Fisher, Dalesman, Irishman, and Highlander meet at the fishers' inn. It is a harvest-home, a Yorkshire "mell," a sailors' spree, a border fight, and an Irish wake combined. Some years ago a friend of mine assisted by accident, in the character of an unnoticed spectator, at one of these gatherings. His journal ran as follows :—

" Early on in the evening.—A gigantic Highlander is thrown out of the door by the united force of five men. Mad drunk and very angry, he retires to his lair, and the door is 'steeked.'

" 8 P.M.—The Highlander has effected an entrance, the door having been left ajar in an unguarded manner. The constable has been sent for, but of course was not to be found—in the vernacular, 'he's awa.' Dreadful uproar. Highlander has possessed himself of a domestic implement—to wit, the fire-shovel—and has threatened to brain every one round. The women are still at the helm of government, and occasionally scream so loudly as to frighten every male present; but they never lose their courage and presence of mind, though one privately confessed to me that she 'wearied for the fishers' coming, as the Heeghlander was a dark man and the Irish had gotten their hooks with them.'

" 8.30 P.M.—The Highlander has been again cast forth, shovel in hand. The Irish within execute a war-dance. Highlander patrols before the house, shouldering his weapon and uttering many imprecations. The whole village population has turned out to look at him, and he is contemplated in silent awe and at a respectful distance. His wife or daughter has appeared, and vainly tries to coax him home. Failing, she curses the spectators well, both in good Gaelic and broad Scotch.

" 9 P.M.—A dozen and more fishers have arrived, and confidence is restored. The Highlander has slunk in with them, but is quiet and disposed for sentiment. He still hugs his shovel. The women are buoyant and radiant.

" 10 P.M.—A wild Dalesman has gone mad, and after running all over the house, fell down, and has been laid on a bench to recover. An Irishman has been led out wounded and weeping. Six other Irish stand round him in pitying sympathy; they have washed his face, and I think kissed him. He still continues to proclaim that he's 'a dead man an' kilt intirely.' They have now got him on his legs, and his grief seems to be subsiding.

" Closing time comes.—They all turn out, though unwillingly; but the women give decisive orders, and no rest till they are obeyed. Every one challenges every one else to fight on the road. All terminates in a national dance of reel, hornpipe, and Irish jig combined, each man whistling his own tune.

"'It's a vara beastly sight to see the men fecht,' said a handsome stately fishwife ; 'but it's only the Heeglanders and Irish that do sic an thing,' she added, with complacent pride ; 'it's no our ain fishers.'

"A week later.—I have seen my friend the Highlander more or less drunk from morn till night, and night till morning, now seven days running. Many small shops in Scotland sell whisky, and what he cannot get at the inn he procures from the shops. He has not slept or had his clothes off his back all the time, and the strings and buttons by which they are held together begin to fail conspicuously. 'He'll be having a touch of the horrors,' said one man to the other. 'No just yet,' was the reply. 'He has been three times in at the flesher's the day for a pund of chops, and carried them awa' in his haund, and he's just cookit them and eaten them a'. He'll no dee whiles that he can eat.'"

Contented.

DEEP SNOWS OF DEATH HAVE CAUGHT MY FAILING FEET,
DROWSY I SINK—AH, LET ME SLEMBER SOON !
HAVE I NOT WALK'D AMONG THE MEADOW-SWEET,
AND FELT MY OWN HEART GLORIOUS AS JUNE,
AND LIV'D MY FILL ? GAY, GAY THE FANCIES CAME,
I COULD DRAW MIRTH FROM SILENCE OR DULL BOOKS,
WHEN THIS FAINT LIFE THAT FALTERS THROUGH MY FRAME,
THROBB'D MUSIC, LIKE THE BEATING PULSE OF BROOKS.
AND WHEN DEAR FACES FROM MY SIGHT HAD VANISH'D,
STILL, AS THE BLIND YOU PITY MAY SEE MOST,
FAIR NIGHT FETCH'D BLISS THAT DARKER DAYTIME BANISH'D,
AND IN SOME HAPPY DREAM I FOUND MY LOST.
I SHALL NOT SLEEP SUCH SLEEP, AND DREAM ANEW,
FOR BETTER THAN MY DREAM IS COMING TRUE.

M. B.

Punishment in the Days of Old.

GREAT as we think ourselves in science, ingenious device, and hugo construction, it must after all be admitted that we fall very far short of our progenitors, and that not merely in matters of no moment, but in almost all great and noble things, from the building of a church or the forging of a stout blade up to a good hard-hitting prize fight. The very best of our painters would rejoice to hold a taper to Raphael or Rubens; but whether they would be altogether worthy of the office is quite another thing. Our poets would sing very small indeed beside Dante or Chauer; though we have not the slightest doubt that one or two of them could earn a five shilling fine for "brawling" as well as, if not better than the latter, or get up a seditious riot as cleverly as the former. Few of our architects, we suspect, could pass the ordeal applied to freemasons in those days. Even Mr. Bennet himself would be compelled to hide his diminished head in presence of the horologer who constructed the clock that ornamented the dome of Dantzie. The bonnets and chignons of 1868 are very fair in their way, but they are the merest trifles in comparison with the superb head-dresses of the fourteenth century, when it was usual to enlarge the city gates to admit the tower of coils that rose story on story, over every pretty face. The heaviest swell among us would cut a remarkably poor figure beside a Gaveston, a Courtney, a Bonnivet, or a Bussy d'Amboize; or rather, any of these gallants would cut a very poor figure in him, for assuredly they would either disdain to recognize his existence as "a man and a brother," or drill a few holes in his body for presuming to aspire to their fellowship in such unworthy garb. And even that battle of battles which poets sang, and bishops, it is whispered, consecrated with their presence,—the combat between Sayers and Heenan,—was as a satyr to Hyperion contrasted with the tournament in splendour, in gallantry, and especially in black eyes and bloody noses. But if we were called on to name anything in particular in which a great falling off from the past is visible we should certainly designate the gibbet as one of the little matters in which we have most degenerated from the perfection of our sires.

It is only after tedious investigation and with much reluctance, that we are brought to hang up an occasional scoundrel; and we are glad of any excuse that may enable us to dispense with the last disgusting act of the tragedy. But our ancestors were not so squeamish. In their view axe and cord were specifics for every disorder that could affect the body politic, and they applied both unrelentingly. And we are even more

unworthy of our sires in the matter of secondary inflictions. Penal servitude and transportation may be excellent things in their way; but our fine old English gentlemen and their foreign contemporaries would have scoffed at such effeminate devices. Did any one among these dangerous classes exhibit a taste for illegal drilling, or handling edged tools—sword or pen—in a dangerous way, or taking a sly aim from behind a wall—they seldom bothered themselves with mere humdrum precautionary measures, but proceeded at once to place a restraint on his propensities by that particular form of ventilation which his case suggested.

There were few things in those good old days that might not be rendered criminal according to the temper of the particular time and tyrant. Did a court physician fail to cure, they hung him up or cut him down as happened to be most convenient; nor was he much better off when the utmost success attended his efforts. Cottier, the physician of Louis XI., atoned for the skill with which he had prolonged the hated life of his master, with a fine of 50,000 crowns—equal to as many pounds of our money. And doubtless he considered himself not all unlucky to escape so easily, for the two Augustine monks who undertook the cure of Charles the Mad, when every sensible practitioner shrank from the task, were beheaded and quartered on the next relapse of their patient.

And the merchant of “lang syne” was no better off than the surgeon. An archbishop of Cologne once built a strong castle at the intersection of four roads, and presented it, with his blessing, to a poor relation who had been in the army. When the soldier desired to be informed how he was to maintain his garrison, since the excellent prelate had omitted to assign him a salary, the latter replied very significantly by pointing out the situation of the fortress, and the poor relation made such good use of the hint that he died a millionaire. Indeed, it was not a remarkable thing in those days for gentlemen to break up every road except that one which led immediately under their battlements, in order to facilitate their pillage of the trader. Sometimes when the neighbouring princes found themselves in difficulties they made war on the rich burghers, especially of Flanders, robbing and ravaging until the merchants came to terms and bought them off, while those who had no such prey handy betook them to what was termed “borrowing”—a transaction the nature of which is very neatly illustrated by the following anecdotes:—The good people of Ghent, having once upon a time lent our Edward III. 200,000 crowns, ventured several years after to request payment—a proceeding so preposterously absurd that it drew roars of laughter from the Lords of the Council to whom the deputies applied. Nor was this by any means harsh treatment. The lively Duke of Orleans having, in a fit of religious fervour, vowed to pay his debts called his creditors together by sound of trumpet. He really was sincere, and made what he considered ample arrangements, but he reckoned without his host. The crowd, 800 and upwards, that presented themselves at the appointed time horrified him, and, despairing

of being able to satisfy them otherwise, he flogged a dozen or so by way of example, and dismissed the rest with hideous threats as to what would befall should they still persist in teasing him with their paltry bills. And Charles the Vile, of Navarre, squared an account in a similar way. Henry of Transtamar having expelled his brother, Peter the Cruel, the latter was returning to his dominions escorted by the Black Prince and 30,000 men. As Charles held the passes of the Pyrenees both brothers applied to him—the one offering a couple of towns for free passage, and the other a large sum that the defiles might be barred. The offers were equally tempting, and Charles made up his mind to earn them both. He took the money and then excused himself from obstructing the march of the invaders by hiring one Oliver de Mauny to waylay him and clap him in prison. When the Black Prince had passed the King of Navarre demanded his release. But de Mauny had profited too well by his employer's example to keep strictly to his bargain. He pocketed his hire, and then affecting to consider the king as a true prisoner of war, refused to part with him except on the customary terms—a large ransom. Most people would have given way to anger under such barefaced extortion, but not so Charles, who, thoroughly appreciating such a pretty piece of perfidy even when exercised on himself, chuckled over it with the greatest relish, and, in short, agreed at once to his very good friend's demand. The latter, perfectly satisfied with himself and everybody else, consented to accompany the Vile one to Tudela in order to receive his pay, which he did directly he entered the town—only it was on the scaffold and from the hands of the hangman. Of course it required some little dexterity to induce close-fisted people to part with their cash on such terms; but the kings and princes of the Middle Ages were always equal to the occasion, and the Tudors and Plantagenets brilliantly so. Everybody knows how King John coaxed a loan from the Hebrew, and such persuasives as a few weeks' lodging in the pleasant domicile called "Little Ease," or a campaign as a common soldier against the wild borderers, were applied with success to an obstinate banker by the last Royal Harry. It need scarcely be said that the example of the king was never lost upon the courtier. And thus—so far as his relations with the powerful extended—the wealthy plebeian was in a perpetual dilemma. It was dangerous to lend and equally so to withhold. For when a creditor became too importunate a judicious application of whip, knife, or noose, abated the nuisance; while the capitalist who refused to do a little bill ran the risk of having himself and his business suspended together.

But violence was then the universal remedy. Nothing could mitigate the horrors of famine or pestilence like a massacre of the Jews and lepers; and it was the easiest thing in the world to put down a popular tumult by stringing to the trees, or still more convenient sign-posts, as many of the mob as authority could contrive to lay hands on. Here are a couple of instances, taken almost at random out of ten thousand. The Crusaders brought the leprosy home from the East, and uncleanly habits, bad food,

and defective sanitary arrangements rendered it for a period a really formidable epidemic, while its loathsome nature invested it with exceeding terror. The lepers were everywhere immured in hospitals, which were erected and maintained by charity. Between 1314 and 1321 a series of famines and pestilences destroyed vast multitudes, probably a third of the whole population of Europe. In the last of those years startling rumours were heard in all directions. It was told that the Spanish Moors had determined to exterminate the Christians from the face of the earth ; that they had employed the Jews to effect their purpose ; that the Jews, again, had deputed the task to the lepers, and that these miserable beings had agreed to carry out the strange design by infecting all the healthy round them with their own hideous malady. It was further stated that the lepers had actually deliberated the matter in four grand convocations, attended by deputies from every lazarus-house in Europe, with the exception of two in England—an exception which gave the story a greater seeming of reality ; and that they had finally decided to effect their object by poisoning all the springs, and by the still more dreaded means of magic spells. The story was exactly suited to the era, and was everywhere greedily credited, especially in France, whose king and people took the lead in punishing the assumed criminals. That country was soon in one of its numerous tiger fits—and, it need scarcely be added, the scene of unutterable horrors. Here, the lazarus-houses and their inmates were burnt together ; there, the lepers were pushed at the point of the lance into the nearest river ; in other quarters, again, they were stoned to death, or hunted down, and slaughtered like wolves ; while the few survivors endeavoured, too often in vain, to shelter their wretchedness among the woods and rocks. Occasionally, indeed, affection rose stronger than disgust and terror, and snatched the victim from destruction, or sought to mitigate his fate by sharing it with him. But as for the Jews, they experienced no mercy whatever. Such of them as escaped instant massacre were committed to prison and subjected to the torture. Their shrieks of agony rang from every dungeon ; and, when these were stilled, a thousand fires blazed to devour them—160, including male and female, infant and grandsire, perishing in a single one at Toulouse. It was not until the commencement of another reign that these atrocities ceased ; and then “acts of grace” were put forth, which—admitting the reality of the conspiracy and the justice of the punishment inflicted—advised that the revenues of the lazarus-houses might be restored ; that such of the unfortunate lepers as had escaped, and who were sternly prohibited from following any occupation by which they could maintain themselves, might be mercifully permitted to live on by the help of charity, that is, supposing charity not to have been killed off so far as they were concerned by the horrible accusation ; and that the Jews might be allowed to leave their prisons between sunrise and sunset, in order to raise the money by which the great favour of exile was to be bought. Nor did the occasional rioter fare very much better than Jew or leper. In the reign of Henry III. the Londoners happened to quarrel with the people of Westminster at a

wrestling match. The former grew riotous, broke a good many heads, and pulled down several houses—much to the amusement of nobility and knighthood, which happened, in considerable force, to be looking on. But the rioters having foolishly extended the latter portion of their performance to some tenements belonging to the Abbot of Westminster, the aspect of things underwent a great change in the view of the lordly proprietors. The latter instantly mounted and charged, capturing several dozens of the mob, and dispersing the rest. The ringleaders were hanged at once, without form or process, and the remainder of the captives dismissed, with their feet chopped off.

The thousands who died for witchcraft show how dangerous it was to be ugly or poor in the “glorious days of old ;” and, as hundreds of instances attest, it was almost as fatal to be conspicuous for wealth, and especially for beauty. Indeed, from the days of Elgiva to those of Mary Stuart, a fair lady is scarcely ever mentioned by the Chroniclers except as the subject of a tragedy. Nor are we without recorded instances of gentlemen who were ruined solely by their good looks. It was not, indeed, any unwomanly repugnance to his handsome face that induced Queen Matilda to consign the Saxon Brihtric to perpetual imprisonment ; though those who remember the rather eccentric style of wooing—a good thrashing and a roll through a mud puddle—which finally fixed her affections on the Conqueror, might be inclined to think otherwise. But, exceptional as she showed herself to William, it is quite certain that Matilda was even more than sufficiently appreciative of personal graces in the case of Brihtric, since she was so taken with that mediæval exquisite, when ambassador at her father’s court, that she actually offered him her hand. And it was to punish his refusal that, years after, the unforgiving queen begged the Saxon from her husband as her share of the English spoil.

But the Jew aside, there was nobody so liable to forfeit life or limb, three or four hundred years ago, as the immediate servant of the Crown. Disobedient, he was pretty sure to meet death by the award of his master ; while, if he distinguished himself by too strict adherence to orders, he was generally despatched out of the world by that master’s successor. Indeed, in nearly every case during those much-lauded times, the accession of a new monarch, or the weakness of a reigning one, was the signal for an onslaught on all who had rendered themselves obnoxious in regal service, especially by accumulating riches. Every court in Europe had its Calderons and Straffords—its Empsons and Giaes—its long succession of ministers and minions—who, as a rule, atoned with life for too faithful service. It must be allowed that the greedy and the vindictive were generally justified in bringing their victims to the scaffold by their abundant crime. But this was not invariably the case. Now and then an upright minister, and even a favourite with some little principle, did make his appearance at Court. Not that the innocence of such a one availed him much when his evil day arrived, except to precipitate his doom and aggravate his sufferings. For ruin and torture were rendered much more certain and acute by the charges of witchcraft and heresy which were

usually resorted to in lack of more substantial matter of accusation. So, among a host of others, found Euguerrand de Marigni, Minister of Finance to Philip the Fair. Having been rash enough to give the lie to Charles of Valois, the brother of his sovereign, in return for a similar compliment, he paid the penalty of his indiscretion at the earliest opportunity—the death of his master. That event made Charles regent of France, and his very first act was the imprisonment of his enemy. The prince then went to work like a railway committee against an unpopular contractor or chairman, with the trifling difference that he tortured the clerks instead of the accounts, in order to convict the man he hated of embezzlement. Finding that particular method of distorting figures useless, it was next determined to accuse the fallen statesman of sorcery, and the success of this plan was all that Charles could have desired. It was announced that de Marigni's wife and sister, acting under his direction, had employed one of the professors of diablerie that then swarmed in all directions, to aid them in destroying the whole royal race. We need not pause to investigate the particular species of incantation by which the de Marignis and their associate were accused of intending to effect their purpose, since, whichever way the charge ran, it enabled the regent to effect his. The magician, assured of death in any case, hanged himself to escape the atrocious torture which awaited him, while his wife and servant were burnt alive. De Marigni's wife and sister were sentenced to be immured for life, and the hapless courtier himself, in spite of his noble birth, which—as the law then ran—ought to have secured him from such ignominy, was not only hanged, but, by a singular fortune, his remains were afterwards fastened to the gibbet which himself had caused to be erected shortly before at Montfaucon, for the exposure of executed felons. Four of his successors in office underwent the same fate, and for very similar reasons, during the next two centuries—the last of them, Semblancy, going to the gallows in 1522, as the proxy of the mother of Francis I., who had made the unfortunate intendant of finance her instrument in ruining an army, in order to gratify the grudge she bore its general, Lautrec. And judicial mortality was even more rife among chancellors, constables, chamberlains, and other great officers of state. Indeed, no mediæval statesman was at all sure of dying quietly in his bed, unless he happened to be a dignitary of the Church. In that case, indeed, he was usually safe. Even Louis XI., much as he hated Cardinal Balue, shrank from putting him to death. And, in time, this impunity of the clergy came to be so well understood, that every prudent minister took care to avail himself of it, by purchasing a cardinal's hat, or, at the very least, a bishopric.

Occasionally there were rulers who delighted to place people in such ticklish positions that any course of action might be interpreted into treason. Our own Elizabeth had some knowledge of this particular branch of "kingcraft." But its supreme master—not even excepting the author of the celebrated ambiguity, "Spare not to kill the King is well,"—was Louis XI. Certain citizens of Arras having requested his per-

mission to visit the Court of Burgundy on business, Louis told them in person that he considered them quite capable of deciding that small matter without troubling him. Taking the King's reply for assent, they set out—twenty-three in number—on their journey; but before they had traversed a league they were stopped, brought back, and decapitated by that gloomy official, Tristam l'Hermite. One of the victims had not long before been appointed a counsellor of the Parliament of Paris by Louis, and now the ferocious tyrant caused the severed head to be invested with the usual cap of office, and deposited in its proper place among the members of that legal body, when assembled in their hall. Again and again did the powerful of those ages, which respected the text, "Touch not mine anointed," too profoundly to bring the crowned felon himself to the scaffold, execute him by substitute, in the persons of such of his servants as happened to fall the first into their hands. The Count of Harcourt and three other gentlemen were beheaded by John, King of France, in 1355, and twenty-two years later two others of equal rank by his successor Charles, in punishment of a few of the numerous crimes perpetrated by their master, that same Charles the Vile, one specimen of whose handiwork we have already related. But the reprobate himself did not finally escape. His death was not indeed a judicial one, but it was fully as terrible. Being accustomed, in his later years, to sleep in night-clothes that had been steeped in spirits of wine, these at last took fire—it was whispered that his servants deliberately ignited them—and thus the monster perished in some such agony as it had delighted him to inflict.

It was, however, on their insurgents that the powers of the Middle Ages delighted to lavish their penalties. The people of Dinant having quarrelled with their lord, Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, the leading demagogues took a course very common in those days to render the breach irreparable. They hanged his messengers, executed himself in effigy over their walls, and indulged in the coarsest reflections on the duchess. And they suffered fearfully. Unable to resist the force which the rage of the offended prince gathered instantly against them, they surrendered at discretion; but they might as well have fought it out to the last. The duke sacked the city for three days, then set it on fire, and when the blaze streamed highest had 800 of the citizens pinioned in couples, back to back, and thrown into the Meuse. The remainder he sold as slaves, and, with vengeance still unsated, set his workmen in crowds to pull down the blackened ruins, and thus efface every vestige of the hated town. But this evil deed was outdone at Nesle by his successor, Charles le Temeraire. Revenging the perfidy of their prince on the hapless people he slew garrison and inhabitants alike, allowing none to escape but a few archers whose hands he had previously lopped off at the wrists. When the fierce duke rode into the reddest scene of slaughter—the principal church—and saw the heaps of slain that lumbered the floor, he crossed himself with grateful satisfaction saying, "Qu'il voyait monet belle chose, et qu'il avoit avec lui mouet bons bouchers." But even poetic justice had reason to be satisfied with the fate of this butcher prince. He

who *would not* hear another's cry for mercy encountered a foe on the lost field of Nanci who could not hear his own ; he fell by the hand of Claude of Beaumont, who was deaf, and to whom, therefore, his offer of surrender was addressed in vain. Our own favourite heroes are by no means free from the same dark reproach. The Black Prince punished the treachery of the Bishop of Limoges by sparing the offender and massacring the innocent people, with the honourable exception of a few knights whose gallant resistance had won his admiration. And Henry V. inflicted a similar punishment on the inhabitants of Meaux for what appears to us a very inadequate offence. As soon as the English army appeared before their walls the men of Meaux placed an ass on their ramparts, and beating it until it brayed, jeeringly invited the English, whose attention had been attracted by the odd spectacle, to come and rescue their king who, as they asserted, was crying out for help. What a period it must have been when a hero could be stimulated to massacre by such miserable buffoonery ! Yet, after all, massacre, however indiscriminate, was by no means the worst thing that could befall rebels. The Count of Evreux, who ruled Normandy during the minority of Duke Richard, having detected a conspiracy which the peasants had organised against the ruling classes, arrested all the ringleaders, and, without bringing them to trial, first punished them according to his own cruel pleasure, and then gave his subordinates full licence to add to his sentence whatever their evil fancy could suggest. Some of the wretches were blinded, their hands cut off, or their sinews seared with hot irons ; others again were impaled, placed at slow fires, or submitted to shower-baths of molten lead. The few who survived this diabolical treatment were paraded through the villages as objects of terror and then sent home. And this excellent count was at least equalled by Charles VI. of France. In revenge for a Hyde Park sort of demonstration of the good citizens of Paris in 1381, that king, besides fining and taxing to an unlimited extent, and imprisoning whomsoever he pleased, hanged many, drowned more, and cutting off the right arms of some hundreds, suspended the severed limbs from the necks of their owners as, to use his own words, "an eternal badge of infamy." Nor was the conduct of these rulers by any means exceptional. Through every country in Europe mutilation was then the lot of those prominent insurgents and rioters who happened to escape the gallows. It was therefore perpetually in action, for the revolts of the lower classes were as ceaseless as their provocation, and the latter was everlasting. Crushed, degraded, and demoralized as they were, the serfs still retained some portion of manly feeling, and whenever they could they rose to assert it. In spite of their iron panoply, their trained retainers, and their moated walls, the nobles were frequently surprised, and for a time the infuriated peasantry carried all before them, robbing, murdering, and perpetrating every other horror ; until—compact, and strong, and mad for vengeance—down came the cavaliers. When the long lance and the heavy sword were tired, and the arm was weary with smiting, then, and not till then, was the executioner called in. Shoals of

the miserable insurgents were tied up to the trees ; and still greater multitudes dismissed fearfully disfigured, to crowd the highways with beggars, and to be everywhere a warning, but, alas ! a fruitless one, against future revolt. For " Serfs ye were, serfs ye are, and bondmen ye shall remain"—*Rustici quidem fuistis et estis, et in bondagio permanebitis*, as Walsingham reports it—was the sentence that rang after the fugitives, and the conquerors could take no surer means of perpetuating rebellion than by carrying it out.

The mediæval penal code eschewed monotony just as carefully as weakness. Its capital and other corporal punishments might be rather more frequent than modern prejudices approves of, but excellent care was taken to divest them of tedious uniformity. Mr. Justice Tresilyan, the very worthy predecessor of Jeffreys, was quite an artist in this species of deadly variety, as the followers of John Ball and Wat Tyler experienced, some of whom he hanged four times over before he allowed them to die. But clever as our English adepts were—and some of them were exceedingly so—we must admit that they competed but poorly with their continental rivals, with whom, in the good old time, death was beyond all question the veritable " king of terrors." Thanks to our novelists, the reading public is pretty well acquainted with the commoner appliances of torture, and we are therefore not under the necessity of enlarging on such fascinating items as the rack, the wheel, the thumbscrew, and the boot. But these were only the everyday forms of punishment. There were always individuals, princes and politicians, especially of the Byzantine empire, who rose superior to such vulgar usages, and with whom " killing by inches " was not a mere figure of speech, but a dread reality. Indeed some of their detestable inventions of cruelty have obtained as wide celebrity as the bull of Phalaris. There was the " chambre à crucer "—a heavy chest, short, shallow, and lined with sharp stones—in which the sufferer was packed, and the lid, heavily weighted, shut down, on him. There were the " bernicles," consisting of a mattress, on which the victim was fastened by the neck with bullock's sinews to keep him from moving, while his legs were passed through a kind of stocks, and crushed between two great logs of wood, on the uppermost of which a man was seated ; the process being repeated on the third day, which, as the old chronicler tells us, " is the cruelest thing that ever was heard of." There were the iron cages of Louis XI., in which some of his victims spent years, and which were so maliciously contrived that every position—standing, sitting, or lying—was equally uncomfortable to the occupant. But, unquestionably, the master contrivances of all these delicate inventions for producing excruciating agony were the " baiser de la vierge " of Baden Baden, and the " iron coffin " of Lissa. In the former the prisoner, blindfold and fastened in a chair, was lowered by a windlass through a well-like shaft, reaching from the top of the castle deep down into the heart of the rock on which it stands, so deep—for the shaft still exists—that the visitor passing beneath can barely discern the glimmering daylight at the top. Here he was immured in a dungeon hewn out of the living stone, and fitted with a door

of the same material a foot thick, so artfully constructed that it was not to be distinguished from the adjoining wall. In this miserable cell, surrounded by darkness that might be felt—silent, helpless, hopeless, like a toad in the centre of its block—he remained until the hour of trial. He was then brought before his judges, who awaited him, masked and solemn, in a larger excavation, called the Hall of Judgment. From thence he was conducted to the torture chamber—a den amply supplied with all the necessary implements—and subjected to its amenities according to the discretion of his judges. This over, the captive was sped through the last act of the tragedy. He was unbuckled from his iron bed, and directed to kiss a bronze statue of the Virgin, that stood at the end of one of the passages leading from the chamber, as the seal of whatever declaration had been wrung from his agony. Wearily he dragged himself along, with tottering limbs and failing strength, until, as he raised his lips to the mild face of the Madonna, a trap-door gave way beneath his tread, and precipitated him, fathoms down, upon a series of delicately-poised wheels—

All horrent with projecting spears—

which his fall set in rapid motion. Nor do we exaggerate in the least, for the fragments of the murderous machinery, stuck thickly over with bits of bone and pieces of dress, still remain at the bottom of the fearful oublie. More awful still was the punishment of the iron coffin, wherein the prisoner saw his dungeon contracting round him day by day and hour by hour, the sides stealing up and the roof creeping down—slowly, steadily, silently—passionless as fate, and as remorseless—the dread machinery maintaining the calm monotony of its march, through lingering days and nights of horror, until the final collapse crushed him.

But even the worst of these was mildness itself when compared with the infernalities occasionally practised on a few exceptional victims of exasperated power. Regicides were tortured with more than Indian ferocity, until the body was incapable of further suffering. Jornandi, a descendant of the Norman conquerors of Sicily, in requital for rebellion against the Emperor Henry VI., was enthroned naked on a seat of red-hot iron, and crowned with a similar diadem. A noble matron of Constantinople, having refused the hand of her daughter to one of the infamous parasites of the second Theodore Lascares, that ingenious tyrant caused the obstinate dame to be stripped and enclosed to the neck in a sack along with a number of cats, who were pricked into furious exercise of tooth and talon by a couple of executioners. Another of these worthy rulers, Justinian II., was accustomed to punish his insolvent tributaries by suspending them, head downwards, in the offensive smoke of a fire fed by noxious weeds. And a third, Constans II., having in vain endeavoured to soothe the jealousy excited in his brother Theodosius by consigning him to the priesthood, at length murdered the unfortunate youth in one of the atrocious ways peculiar to the East. But the crime was too horrible for even the Greeks of that blood-stained capital—habituated, to tolerate as they were, to the daily perpetration of similar deeds, and rising indignant, they drove the assassin from his capital. But not into

security. A vengeance far surpassing any they could have inflicted thenceforward shared his exile, nor ever left his side even for an instant until the distant hour of his own murder. Then only did the phantom of his victim cease to present its chalice filled with blood to the murderer's lips, and to appal his ear with the terrible invitation, "Drink, brother, drink! drink, brother, drink!" But we must not linger over that sink of depravity, the Lower Empire, or we shall feel the poisonous influence of its exhalations; like Ducange, for instance, who discusses with too evident relish the various methods devised, under the patronage of the Byzantine rulers, for extinguishing the sight. We merely pause to remark that one of the most used of these imperial punishments, the amputation of the tongue, originated a "miracle"—that of speech without tongues—which edified the orthodox of the fifth century, confounded the Arian persecutors who had recourse to it, and exceedingly bothered the historian Gibbon. That writer, unable to controvert the evidence adduced in favour of the marvel, very characteristically insinuates that he has as good a right to be obstinate in doubt as the Arians. Questionless, he would have exulted had he known that the "miracle" was no miracle at all, but a common occurrence in the East, where the punishment has been practised beyond memory to this extent, the amputation of *half* the organ, and where those who have fortitude enough to encounter the pain and risk attending *total* excision, recover the powers of speech lost by the former operation.

England, we rejoice to write, offers fewer examples of these abominations than any other country, though, we hope, not exactly for the reason assigned by that excellent lawyer, Sir Thomas Smith, who, writing in the reign of Elizabeth, tells us that "it is the nature of the Englishman to abide no torment, and that, therefore, he will confess himself rather to have done anything, yea, to have killed his own father, than to suffer torment." Nevertheless, this old island has witnessed too much evil of the kind. Our kings, certainly, did not go quite so far in defining treason as Dionysius, who included dreams in the catalogue of capital offences, but some of them effected a very close approximation—notably that Achilles, Edward IV., who put one man to death for a jest, and another for a petulant remark. And it is with anything rather than the self-satisfaction of Britons that we peruse that passage of Sir Edward Coke's which explains hanging, drawing, and disembowelling on scriptural principles, and justifies them by patriarchal precedent, or certain statutes of "Bluff Harry's," or those pages of our history which tell us how one of our kings placed a family under the scaffold that they might be wetted by their father's blood; how another, and a hero, allowed the gallant Lord Cobham to unite in his death the various penalties decreed against treason and heresy; and how a third permitted the previously unheard-of punishment of boiling alive to be inflicted on the cook of "saintly Fisher."

All this infamous variety of torture and death was at the unlimited disposal of every one of the thousand tyrants whose mad whim was law in

the terrible Middle Ages. And an untimely display of virtue, valour, or self-respect, was far more certain than outrageous villainy to bring their vengeance down. Alain Blanchard was beheaded by Henry V. for his heroic defence of his native city, Rouen ; 400 of the English garrison were tied in couples and drowned in the Sienne for their stubborn resistance at Pontoise ; Albert Bieling ennobled the murderous squabbles of the "Hooks and Codfish" by his conduct when doomed to be buried alive,—sentence having been pronounced, he asked and obtained, not mitigation, but a month's respite to take leave of his family, and returned at the expiration of the period to undergo his fate. One of the Raugrafs of Hardenburgh quarrelled with the abbot of a neighbouring monastery, made him prisoner, set his abbey on fire, and carrying the captive churchman to the battlements of his castle, took good care that he should not avert his eyes from the unpleasant spectacle by building his head into the wall. The monks of Glastonbury having vexed their abbot Toustain by obstinately refusing to learn a new chant—the latter at last added the persuasions of a band of men-at-arms to his own, and these gentlemen soon managed to make the monks change their tune by slaughtering eighteen of them. "Take care of him," said Charles the Mad, nodding towards a knight, who appeared to pass him on the high road with some diminution of respect, and immediately the gentleman was pursued, tied up in a sack, and thrown into the next river. And the same fate, but rather more justly, was inflicted on the Bastard of Bourbon, by Charles the Wise. John Goffredi, who abandoned the office of bishop to earn the title of the "Devil of Arras," performed the following hideous exploit at the instigation of Louis XI.:—The Count of Armagnac, a man of many crimes, sought shelter from the vengeance of his king in the strong castle of Lectour. But the Devil of Arras got in by swearing solemnly to a capitulation. Breaking his oath the next moment, he stabbed the count in the arms of his wife, poisoned the latter, and, to destroy all evidence of his perfidy, exterminated the inhabitants of the district. That same Louis was in the habit of ornamenting the approaches to his castle of Plessis les Tours by long rows of bodies suspended from the trees. Nor was this an exclusively royal pastime. In troublous times almost any petty captain could indulge in it. Outside of Meaux stood, until very recently, the stump of a tree much patronised in the days of long ago by one of those amiable cavaliers called the Bastard of Vaurus. This gentle knight was accustomed to dispose of his prisoners among the branches of this tree, and from one of these same branches he finally dangled himself, by the just sentence of our Henry V. "The Oak of Reformation," too, at Norwich, was similarly and largely used by Roman Catholic rebel and Protestant avengers in the days of Edward VI.

Favourites, brothers, wives, and husbands, were variously destroyed without exciting any great sensation. The Countess Jane of Flanders crowned a life of profligacy and a reign of tyranny by denouncing her own father as an impostor, and putting him to a shameful death after the

infliction of exquisite torture. The Duke of Albany starved his nephew. Joan of Naples had the first of her four husbands smothered between two mattresses, and suffered a similar fate. Louis le Hutin had his queen Margaret strangled with a napkin. But the list is endless, and as we have no desire to compile a mere catalogue of horror, with one more specimen we shall gladly take leave of these enormous perversions of justice.

Francis I. of Britanny was worthy of the era that produced Louis XI., Richard of Gloucester, the Devil of Arras, and Oliver le Dain ; and so was his minister, Arthur de Montaubin. The last was probably the most odiously wicked man of his day ; but that did not prevent him from taking orders, nor from dying quietly an archbishop. This minion quarrelled with Prince Gilles, younger brother of the duke, because the heiress of Dinant had preferred the prince to himself. Incited by his favourite, the duke imprisoned his brother and endeavoured to do him legally to death. False witnesses in plenty were not wanting ; but the case was one of those that now and then take strong hold of the public ; and, besides, Gilles had powerful friends, and, what was much the same thing, Montaubin inveterate enemies ; so no tribunal could be tempted or threatened into pronouncing a capital sentence. The duke then transferred his brother secretly from prison to prison, and thus baffled sympathy until, by the end of the third year, it had pretty nearly subsided. Judging the proper time to have come, the duke instructed the Castellan of Hardovinage, the prince's last gaoler, to put his prisoner to death. That worthy, Olivier de Miel by name, first tried starvation. But unfortunately for the success of this plan, the grated window of the dungeon looked into the castle ditch, where a poor woman gathering sticks was attracted by the prince's groans, and discovered his situation. She did all she could for him without endangering herself—supplied him stealthily and under cover of night with a little coarse bread and water, and brought a priest as poor as herself to administer spiritual comfort through the grating. Astonished after the lapse of many weeks that the prisoner did not die, the gaoler next tried poison, and that too, proving ineffectual, as a last resource he had the prince smothered between two mattresses, and then announced that he had died from apoplexy. The duke was besieging Avranches when informed of his brother's death, and the news drove him at once to his quarters. On his way thither he was arrested by the friar who had acted as the prince's confessor. Laying his hand on the duke's bridle and raising his voice to its loudest pitch, the priest solemnly cited the duke, in the name of the murdered man, to appear within forty days before the judgment-seat of God, and there answer for his crime. Smitten by the terrible summons, the duke put his house in order, appointed his remaining brother to succeed him, and died within the time specified. That is the record. Similar appeals were addressed—one in 1312, to Ferdinand of Castile, therefore called “el Citado,” by the brothers Carvajal, whom he had sentenced to be thrown from a rock on a very dubious charge of murder ; another in 1314, to Pope Clement V. and King Philip the Fair, by Jacques de Molay, Grand Master of the Templars, who, as he stood bound with

the last batch of the doomed knights on the pile to which the executioner was just applying the torch, startled the crowds that had gathered in the April twilight to witness the spectacle by adjuring his oppressors to meet him within the year, in the presence of that Judge whose justice knew no bias.

And yet with all this atrocity it cannot be said that the Law was disregarded during the Middle Ages. Far from it—it was only too active and powerful when invoked by the strong. Indeed, in those aristocratic times, Law was the greatest aristocrat of all, just as during the Reign of Terror it was the thoroughgest revolutionist. And it arrogated to itself the most extraordinary rights and immunities. Feeling a lack of intrinsic worth, it endeavoured to make amends for the deficiency like many another pretender, by an imposing presence. It had as many petty observances as the Church herself,—it clung as tenaciously to every one of them, and the executioner was its master of the ceremonies. Yes, Jack Ketch, detested as he is now, was a great character in the Middle Ages. But then he had something more to do than just to fasten a noose and draw a bolt. The attitude of the prisoner in the cart, the order of the fatal procession, the arrangement of the scaffold and its trappings, and the disposition of the assistants, required the minutest attention. The torture chamber, too, with its various appliances, could not be entrusted to a clumsy valet. And as faction very often brought the noble himself in contact with the executioner, it was necessary that the latter should have a delicate perception of the nice gradations of rank, and be capable of applying his tools with duly respectful demeanour to the sacred person of nobility. Indeed, polite phrases, neat compliments, and well-turned allusions to former achievements dropped nowhere so glibly as on the scaffold and from the lips of Master John Ketch. And this gentleman—for such, in some countries, the fall of a certain number of heads made him—prided himself as much on his skill with his weapons as any other gentleman of his time. Nor was it without reason. More than once has the trunk been known to remain erect for some minutes after the fatal stroke, as if unconscious of its loss. The Constable St. Pol was one of those who were decapitated thus dexterously; but it must be admitted that Little John, who struck the blow, was a master in his craft. *Carnifex nascitur non fit* is just as true as the other reading, and the worthy we have named was a born hangman. His intuitive grace and skill in all that concerned the scaffold excited the unqualified admiration of all his contemporaries, and placed him, while yet in his teens, at the very summit of his profession. But, like many another brilliant genius, he was doomed to an early grave. He quarrelled with a certain carpenter—one Ouden de Bust—over a disputed account, probably concerning repairs done to the gallows, for it is preposterous to suppose that such a man as Little John would degrade himself by associating with a mere vulgar wood-shaver, especially as another knight of the noose, and chiefly on account of his trade, had been selected not long before as a fit and proper companion by the Emperor Wenceslaus. Be that as it may, the

carpenter took his punishment to heart, and determined on revenge. Accordingly, one moonlight night, not very long after, Little John was waylaid by three ruffians, whom the carpenter had associated in his purpose, but by no means on limited liability principles. These youths had very probably some little account of their own in the way of whipping, branding, nose-slitting, and ear-clipping to settle with the worthy official. One of these pretty fellows—the chonieler who relates the circumstance expatiates on their good looks—seized the executioner and pinioned his arms; another, still more frolicsome, tapped him on the head with a paving-stone; and the third, the jolliest of the three, ran him through with a short pike. In five minutes Little John lay dead as the constable himself. Thereupon out rushed the carpenter, who had been eyeing the deed from behind a wall, and hewed off the dead man's feet by the ankles. All four immediately took sanctuary in a neighbouring church, which might have availed to protect them had the victim been any one less distinguished; but, unfortunately for the murderers in the present instance, the people of Paris, especially those who had anything to lose, were too much impressed with the value of the slaughtered man. For once popular indignation mastered popular superstition. The criminals were hauled out without consulting pope or bishop, and after a little torture—administered by the bereaved parent, Henry Cousins, headsman of Paris—the four were hung up “all in a row.”

But unquestionably the most renowned of these gentlemen was Capeluche, the headsman of Paris during the terrible days of the Armagnacs and the Burgundians. Capeluche patronised the latter party, and repeatedly conferred on Duke John the favour of a friendly squeeze of the hand. He was a prominent leader of the butchers, and did his utmost to refine the clumsy method of massacre peculiar to these gentry. Somehow or other authority found itself under the sad necessity of consigning this worthy in his turn to the scaffold, and most characteristic was his journey thither and his behaviour on it. The superintendence of the little affair was committed to one of his former assistants not equal to his work, and Capeluche devoted his last moments to the rectification of the faulty arrangements.

Like all other offices of honour and emolument, that of executioner was hereditary with the very strictest entail. And the emoluments were numerous. The executioner had a handsome fixed salary; he was accustomed to receive gratuities more or less splendid according to the rank of his victims; he was the first official to visit the scene of a suicide, and there, standing on the breast of the victim, he acquired a right to everything he could touch with the point of his seven-foot sword; the women of pleasure were his tributaries; he derived a large indirect income from the surgeons; and, finally, the unmarried executioner had the regal privilege of releasing a woman doomed to death and leading her free from the scaffold—on condition of marrying her

Out of the Silence.

THERE is a certain crescent in a distant part of London—a part distant, that is, from clubs and parks and the splendours of Rotten Row—where a great many good works and good intentions carried out, have taken refuge. House-rent is cheap, the place is wide and silent and airy; there are even a few trees to be seen opposite the windows of the houses, although we may have come for near an hour rattling through the streets of a neighbourhood dark and dreary in looks, and closely packed with people and children, and wants and pains and troubles of every tangible form for the kind colonists of Burton Crescent to minister to.

We pass by the Deaconesses' Home : it is not with them that we have to do to-day ; and we tell the carriage to stop at the door of one of the houses, where a brass-plate is set up, with an inscription setting forth what manner of inmates there are within, and we get out, send the carriage away, and ring the bell for admission.

One of the inmates peeped out from a door-way at us as we came into the broad old-fashioned passage. This was the little invalid of the establishment, we were afterwards told ; she had hurt her finger, and was allowed to sit down below with the matron, instead of doing her lessons with the other children upstairs.

How curious and satisfactory these lessons are any one who likes may see and judge by making a similar pilgrimage to the one which F. and I undertook that wintry afternoon. The little establishment is a sort of short English translation of a great continental experiment of which an interesting account was given some months ago in this Magazine under the title of *Dumb Men's Speech*. Many of my friends were interested in it, and one day I received a note on the subject.

"Dumb men *do* speak in England," wrote a lady who had been giving her help and countenance to a similar experiment over here ; and from her I learnt that this attempt to carry out the system so patiently taught by Brother Cyril was now being made, and that children were being shown how to utter their wants, not by signs, but by speech, and in English, at the Jewish Home for Deaf and Dumb Children in Burton Crescent.

The great difference in this German system as opposed to the French, is that signs are as much as possible discarded after the beginning, and that the pupils are taught to read upon the lips of others, and to speak in words, what under the other system would be expressed in writing or by signs. The well-known Abbé de l'Epée approved, they say, of this method, and wrote a treatise on the subject, and his successor, the Abbé Sicard, says (I am quoting from a quotation), "Le sourd-muet n'est donc totalement rendu à la société que lorsqu'on lui a appris à s'exprimer

de vive voix et de lire la parole dans les mouvements des lèvres." This following very qualified sentence of his is also quoted in a report which has been sent me : " Prenez garde, que je n'ai point dit que le sourd-muet ne peut pas parler, mais ne sait pas parler. Il est possible que Mapuiz apprit à parler si j'avais le temps de le lui apprendre."

Time, hours after hours of patience, good-will, are given freely to this work by the good people who direct the various establishments in the Netherlands where the deaf and dumb are now instructed.

How numerous and carefully organized these institutions are may be gathered from a little pamphlet written by the great Director Hirsch of Rotterdam, who first introduced this system into the schools, and who has lately made a little journey from school to school, to note the progress of the undertaking he has so much at heart. Brussels and Ghent and Antwerp and Bruges, he visited all these and other outlying establishments, and was received everywhere with open arms by the good brothers who have undertaken to teach the system he advocates. Dr. Hirsch is delighted with everything he sees until he comes to Bruges, where he says that he is struck by the painful contrast which its scholars present as compared to the others he had visited on his way. "They looked less gay (moins enjoué) than any of those he had seen." But this is explained to him by the fact that in this school the French method is still partly taught, and he leaves after a little exhortation to the Director, and a warning that public opinion will be against him if he continues the ancient system as opposed to the newer and more intelligible one. It is slower in the beginning, says the worthy Doctor ; it makes greater demands upon our patience, our time, our money, but it carries the pupil on far more rapidly and satisfactorily after the early steps are first mastered, until, when at last the faculty of hearing with the eyes has been once acquired, isolation exists no longer, the sufferer is given back to the world, and every one he meets is a new teacher to help to bring his study to perfection.

The Jewish Home for Deaf and Dumb Children in Burton Crescent has only been started for a few months. The lady who wrote to me guaranteed the rent and various expenses for a year, after which the experiment is to stand upon its own merits. Since the opening of the home I believe that great modifications have taken place in its arrangements, and that it is now to be enlarged and thrown open to any little dumb Christians who, as well as the little Jews, may like to come as day-scholars there, to be taught with much labour and infinite patience and pains what others learn almost unconsciously and without an effort.

F. and I have been going upstairs all this time, and come into a back-room or board-room, opening with folding-doors into the schoolroom, where the children are taught. As we went in the kind young master, M. von Praagh, (he is a pupil, I believe, of Dr. Hirsch's,) came forward to receive us, and welcomed us in the most friendly way. The children all looked up at us with bright flashing eyes—little boys and little girls in

brown pinafores, with cheery little smiling faces peeping and laughing at us along their benches. In the room itself there is the usual apparatus—the bit of chalk, the great slate for the master to write upon, the little ones for the pupils, the wooden forms, the pinafores, the pictures hanging from the walls, and, what was touching to me, the usual little games and frolics and understandings going on in distant corners, and even under the master's good-natured eye. He is there to bring out, and not to repress, and the children's very confidence in his kindness and sympathy seems to be one of the conditions of their education and cure.

He clapped his hands, and a little class came and stood round the big slate—a big girl, a little one, two little boys. "Attention," says the teacher, and he begins naming different objects, such as fish, bread, chamois, coal-skuttle. All these words the children read off his lips by watching the movement of his mouth. As he says each word the children brighten, seize the idea, rush to the pictures that are hanging on the wall, discover the object he has named, and bring it in breathless triumph. "Tomb," said the master, after naming a variety of things, and a big girl, with a beaming face, pointed to the ground and nodded her head emphatically, grinning from ear to ear. But signs are not approved of in this establishment, and, as I have said, the great object is to get them to talk. And it must be remembered that they are only beginners and that the home has only been opened a few months. One little thing, scarcely more than a baby, who had only lately come in, had spoken for the first time that very day,—“â, â, â,” cried the little creature. She was so much delighted with her newly-gotten power that nothing would induce her to leave off exercising it. She literally shouted out her plaintive little “â.” It was like the note of a little lamb, for of course, being deaf, she had not yet learned how to modulate her voice, and she had to be carried off into a distant corner by a bigger girl, who tried to amuse her and keep her still.

"It is an immense thing for the children," said Mr. von Praagh, "to feel that they are not cut off hopelessly and markedly from communication with their fellow-creatures; the organs of speech being developed, their lungs are strengthened, their health improves. You can see a change in the very expression of their faces, they delight in using their newly acquired power, and won't use the finger-alphabet even among themselves." And, as if to corroborate what he was saying, there came a cheery vociferous outbreak of "â's" from the corner where the little girl had been installed with some toys, and all the other children laughed.

I do not know whether little Jew boys and girls are on an average cleverer than little Christians, or whether, notwithstanding their infirmity, the care and culture bestowed upon them has borne this extra fruit; but these little creatures were certainly brighter and more lively than any dozen Sunday-school children taken at hazard. Their eyes danced, their faces worked with interest and attention, they seemed to catch light from their master's face, from one another's, from ours as we spoke; their eagerness, their cheerfulness and childish glee, were really remarkable;

they laughed to one another much like any other children, peeped over their slates, answered together when they were called up. It was difficult to remember that they were deaf, though, when they spoke, a great slowness, indistinctness, and peculiarity was of course very noticeable. But these are only the pupils of a month or two, be it remembered. A child with all its faculties is nearly two years learning to talk.

One little fellow with a charming expressive face and eyes, like two brown stars, came forward, and ciphered and read to us, and showed us his copy-book. He is beginning Hebrew as well as English. His voice is pleasant, melancholy, but quite melodious, and, to my surprise, he addressed me by my name, a long name with many letters in it. Mr. von Praagh had said it to him on his lips, for of course it is not necessary for the master to use his voice, and the motion of the lips is enough to make them understand. The name of my companion, although a short one, is written with four difficult consonants, and only one vowel to bind them together, and it gave the children more trouble than mine had done ; but after one or two efforts the little boy hit upon the right way of saying it, and a gleam of satisfaction came into his face as well as his master's. Mr. von Praagh takes the greatest possible pains with, and interest in every effort and syllable. He holds the children's hands and accentuates the words by raising or letting them fall ; he feels their throats and makes them feel his own. It would be hard indeed if so much patience and enthusiasm produced no results to reward it.

"What o'clock is it?" Mr. von Praagh asked.

"Foor o'clock," said the little boy, without looking up.

"How do you know?" asked the master.

"Miss —— is come," said the little fellow, laughing. This was a lady who came to give the girls their sewing lesson so many times a week.

I need not describe the little rooms upstairs, with the little beds in rows, and the baths, the play-room—the kind arrangement everywhere for the children's comfort and happiness. If the school is still deaf and dumb for most practical purposes, yet the light is shining in ; the children are happy, and understand what is wanted of them, and are evidently in the right way. For the short time he has been at work as yet, Mr. von Praagh has worked wonders.

Babies, as I have just said, with all their faculties are about two years learning to speak. There is a curious crisis, which any one who has had anything to do with children must have noticed, a sort of fever of impatience and vexation which attacks them when they first begin to understand that people do not understand what they say. I have seen a little girl burst into passionate tears of vexation and impatience because she could not make herself immediately understood. I suppose the pretty croonings and chatterings which go before speech are a sort of natural exercise by which babies accustom themselves to words, and which they mistake at first for real talking. Real words come here and there in the midst of the baby-language —detaching themselves by degrees out of the wonderful labyrinth of sound

—real words out of the language which they are accustomed to hear all about them, and something in this way, to these poor little deaf folks, the truth must dawn out of the confusion of sights and signs surrounding them.

This marvellous instinctive study goes on in secret in the children's minds. After their first few attempts at talking they seem to mistrust their own efforts. They find out that their pretty prattle is no good : they listen, they turn over words in their minds, and whisper them to themselves as they are lying in their little cribs, and then one day the crisis comes, and a miracle is worked, and the child can speak.

When children feel that their first attempts are understood they suddenly regain their good temper and wait for a further inspiration. They have generally mastered the great necessities of life in this very beginning of their efforts : "pooty," "toos," "ben butta," "papa," "mama," "nana" for "nurse," and "dolly," and they are content. Often a long time passes without any further apparent advance, and then comes perhaps a second attack of indignation. I know of one little babe who had hardly spoken before, and who had been very cross and angry for some days past, who horrified its relations by suddenly standing up in its crib one day, rosy and round-eyed, and saying, *Bess my soul* exactly like an old charwoman who had come into the nursery.

A friend of mine to whom I was speaking quite bore out my remarks. He said his own children had all passed through this phase, which comes after the child has learned to think and before he is able to speak. One's heart aches as one thinks of those whose life is doomed to be a life of utter silence in the full stream of the mighty flow of words in which our lives are set, to whom no crisis of relief may come, who have for generations come and gone silent and alone, and set apart by a mysterious dispensation from its very own best blessings and tenderest gifts.

I was thinking of this yesterday as we went walking across the downs in the pleasant Easter-tide. I could hardly tell whether it was sight or sound that delighted us most as we went along upon the turf : the sound of life in the bay at the foot of the downs, the flowing of the waves just washing over the low-ridged rocks with which our coast is set ; the gentle triumphant music overhead of the larks soaring and singing in the sunshine. The sea and the shingle were all sparkling, while great bands like moonlight in daylight lay white and brilliant on the horizon of the waters. The very stones seemed to cry out with a lovely Easter hymn of praise ; and sound and sight to be so mingled that one could scarcely tell where one began or the other ended.

If by this new system the patient teachers cannot give everything to their pupils, the ripple of the sea, the song of the lark, yet they can do very much towards it, by leading the children's minds to receive the great gifts of nature through the hearts and sympathy of others, and give them above all that best and dearest gift of all in daily life, without which nature itself fails to comfort and to charm, the companionship of their fellow-creatures and of intelligences answering and responding to their own.

Charles Dibdin and his Songs.

ALTHOUGH Charles Dibdin cannot be put in any comparison with the "Three Lyrists," recently discussed in this Magazine, he was a man whose genius deserved something better than to be hidden in the obscurity which we observe to be creeping over his name. In the first place, he had about him that *cachet* of originality which is the primary merit of a writer, whatever be his school; for men of genius, like human beings, have each a face of their own, while mediocrities, like sheep and cattle, can only be distinguished from each other by experts. To this also must be added, that Dibdin exercised a lyrical influence—made an individual impression—by songs, such as English song-writers have scarcely ever attained. No doubt, English literature contains noble songs,—some of the noblest that have been produced since the myrtle-branch went round from singer to singer—each using his right of "a call" by passing it—at the banquets of the Greeks. But in popular songs,—songs for the open air, the country-gathering, the supper-table, and so forth,—England is less rich than countries which have never rivalled her in greater things. A company of Scotch farmers, or working men, has a far better stock of ditties to draw upon than we haughty Southrons; nor have we any poet who is to a Londoner what Béranger is to a Parisian. Unfortunately, also, this is a state of things which seems at present to be getting worse instead of getting better. Music has become eminently more diffused than it used to be, and good music has enjoyed a share of this improvement. But the song-writer proper, instead of retaining his old leadership, has sunk into a servant of the composer. Musicians have given us "songs without words," and writers have given us what we may call words without songs,—that is to say, words that do not deserve to be called songs, or to rank in literature at all, but are mere semi-mechanical conveniences for the use of the musical artist who still retains the faculty of creation. Sometimes, indeed, as the organs hourly remind us, both words and melody are trash; but we need not dwell on those terrible cases just now. We would only say that, for a time, the song-writer's power has been on the wane. Yet Moore did at least as much for Irish airs as Irish airs did for him; and some of the sweetest of the old Scotch airs would have been forgotten but for the infinitely powerful and infinitely tender lays to which Burns united them. We have all heard of music being married to immortal verse; but in our age they seem to have gone into the Divorce Court.

Now, besides that Charles Dibdin had a speciality in the *genre*,—a speciality for those sea-songs by which his name is chiefly, perhaps solely, remembered,—he was also a composer himself; differing, in this respect,

not only from Horace, Burns, and Béranger, but from most other lyrists of eminence, such as Scott and Campbell. Indeed, he arrived at song-writing through composition, and not at composition through song-writing. "A strong and intuitive propensity to music," he says in his autobiography, "modulated my mind, and cheated it, as it were, into poetry."* His early associations were favourable to him in this respect. Born at Southampton in 1745, he was sent young to Winchester, with some ambitious views towards the Church. But his case was the not uncommon one of a mistaken parental intention, really placing a youngster in conditions harmonising with his natural vocation. The genius of the future singer of "Poor Jack" and "Tom Bowling" was awakened—curiously enough—by the organ of a cathedral. The boy sang in anthems, and at concerts, and received some instruction from Fussell the organist. He began to compose, too, at fourteen, when he produced the air, "In Every Fertile Valley," which afterwards (in 1762) contributed to the success of his first successful piece, the pastoral drama of *The Shepherd's Artifice*. His musical education, however, was by no means thorough, and, like some other men of talent in a similar predicament, he was apt to overrate what unassisted nature can do. He spoke slightlying of the culture of his art; but since Mr. Hogarth assures us that "he never put a bass to one of his own songs without committing gross and palpable errors,"† this was distinctly a pity and a blunder. However, according to the same critic, his instinct of melody was something quite rare and remarkable, so the gift of musical genius cannot be denied him. The passion for its indulgence filled up all his youth, and the proper studies of the venerable foundation of Wykeham appear to have been wholly neglected by him. We regret to say that in one of his writings he speaks of Aristophanes as having belonged to the *Middle Comedy*, a statement which could not have been made at Winchester College in that rigid epoch without peril of flagellation.

While still a boy, Dibdin turned his eyes towards London as the head-quarters of music and of everything else. He had been one of a family of eighteen, and among the eighteen was a brother much older than himself, who holds an important place in his biography, besides being worth remembering for his own sake. This was Captain Thomas Dibdin,—father of the Reverend Mr. Frogmell Dibdin, the bibliographer—a stout seaman of superior talents and character. He had commanded privateers with distinguished gallantry, and also West and East Indiamen, in days when such commands required qualities not inferior to those of an officer of the Royal Navy. The little music-loving, song-loving, Winchester boy looked up to this "big brother" with a mixture of fraternal loyalty and poetic admiration. He was weary of singing anthems, or being asked about to amuse parties in the Cathedral Close or the officers' camp; and Captain Thomas urged him to come to London, and promised to

* *The Professional Life of Mr. Charles Dibdin, written by Himself.* (1803.)

† *Dibdin's Songs.* By GEORGE HOGARTH. (1842.)

introduce him to friends of his in the City who might forward his aims. Not a doubt but this kindness of his brother stamped early on young Dibdin the love of sailors, which was, long afterwards, to make him celebrate them in song ; and it is equally certain that Captain Dibdin was the original of his famous "Tom Bowling." So Charles came up to London, full of musical ambition, and often, as he tells us, played the congregation out of St. Bride's before he was sixteen years old.

One of the friends to whom Charles Dibdin was introduced by his brother, was Johnson, the music-publisher of Cheapside. Johnson did not encourage his talents much, and galled the ambitious and high-spirited lad by setting him down, whenever he came to the shop, to tune harpsichords. Captain Dibdin, too, went on a voyage and was captured by a French man-of-war ; and his City friends found young Charles somewhat too independent in his notions, and not disposed to be made a mere amusing boon-companion. A Mr. Béranger, with whom he became acquainted, (perhaps of the family of the French *chansonnier*, who had relations settled in England,) took a liking to him, and made him known to Rich, the manager of Covent Garden, and other personages of the worlds of music and the drama. He plunged eagerly into these worlds. "The theatres and the opera houses," he says, "were regions of enchantment to me. . . . I have no power of expression that can give the faintest idea of what I felt when I heard the first crash of an overture. It was," adds he, "a great era for music." Galluppi was in England, and his music very popular. Corelli was much admired and studied. And England herself had Dr. Arne, whose genius exercised much influence over Dibdin, to whom he was personally very obliging, and by whom his name and memory were venerated. The success of Arne's *Artaxerxes* in 1762, left Garrick playing to empty benches, and Garrick made a timely tour to Italy. Dibdin began that year, while still in his teens, to make a little way. He was already a poet, composer, and singer, and he soon became an actor. Rich taught him where to lay what he used to call the "emphasy;" and when Rich was succeeded by his son-in-law, Beard, Dibdin was engaged as a chorus-singer at Covent Garden. For the copyright of the first half-dozen songs he sold, he got only three guineas. But Beard encouraged him to write *The Shepherd's Artifice*, already mentioned as his earliest success, which appeared when he was only seventeen, and won him some degree of reputation. The songs in this piece (it must be understood that we are looking at Dibdin in this essay from a *literary* point of view,) are poor ; and this is equally true of the songs in many similar pieces which followed. Dibdin began by imitating the regular, conventional, feebly epigrammatic, insincerely sentimental, eighteenth century manner. Not till he was about forty did he do justice to his true genius in the hearty, humorous, and genuinely tender nautical songs, on which his real fame rests.

It is an observation as old as Cicero's time, and probably older, that the world is very unwilling to admit the excellence of those who distinguish

themselves in more ways than one. Dibdin was a composer, at whom rival composers sneered ; a singer, and therefore keenly scrutinized by singers ; a poet, whom other writers of ballads looked at askance ; and an actor whom jealous actors positively hated. Yet his music was held in respect by Arne ; it could not be denied that he had a baritone voice of sweet and mellow quality ;* his worst songs were up to the level of his time ; and he undoubtedly succeeded as an actor in several parts. This variety, however, so precociously exhibited, and accompanied by energy of character, and, as we guess from his autobiography, by a pretty confident self-appreciation and self-assertion, goes far to explain the antagonism which he excited throughout his career. His theatrical life, whether as author, composer, or actor, was one of war,—war with managers, actors, music-sellers, and nearly everybody else. His actor's career became so intolerable to him that he gave up acting altogether. He quarrelled with Colman, when Colman succeeded Beard in Covent Garden. And his seven years' connection with Garrick was a kind of seven years' war, and terminated in a rupture. It is not likely that Dibdin, who was, beyond dispute, an able, honest, and most industrious man, was in the wrong in all these cases ; nor, on the other hand, is it probable that he was invariably in the right. Garrick, unquestionably, sometimes treated him shabbily and tyrannically ; and there is evidence enough from other quarters that the great actor, though capable of deeds of generosity, was morbidly vain, and apt to be arrogant, or mean, according as circumstances, and the characters of those with whom he was dealing, prompted him to arrogance or meanness. Dibdin was a struggling man, and very much in Garrick's power ; if Dibdin had been a Churchill, Garrick would have crouched to him ; if he had been a Foote, he would have courted him ; if, like John Home, he had been the favourite of a Lord Bute, he would have brought out anything he pleased to write. As it was, he disliked Dibdin's independent temper, and did not do justice to his talents. But Dibdin was of great service to Garrick, both on the occasion of the famous Stratford Jubilee, and at Drury Lane.

The reader would not thank us if we attempted to give an account of the many musical pieces which Dibdin prepared for Drury Lane, Covent Garden, the Haymarket, Sadlers' Wells, and Ranelagh, between 1762, when he brought out *The Shepherd's Artifice*, and 1787, when he ceased to write for the stage. They are now only of antiquarian interest, except for a few of the songs, and even these are very inferior to the songs of a later period. His first sea-song, "Blow High, Blow Low," appeared in a comic opera called *The Seraglio*, produced at Covent Garden in the winter of 1776. But before he fairly got into that vein, he had some singular varieties of fortune to go through. And he also passed nearly two years of the period preceding the war with France which rose out of the American War, at Nancy in Lorraine. During this time he employed himself wisely

* *Mémoir.* By MR. GEORGE HOGARTH.

in studying the French language and literature. The people themselves he did not by any means love ; and it was with a hearty goodwill that he wrote war-songs against them when the great struggle began towards the close of the century.

Unpleasant as had been his relations to managers for so many years, no wonder that Dibdin ardently longed to have a theatre of his own. In the course of his musings on this idea, he hit upon what he thought an excellent site for such a purpose on the Surrey side of Blackfriars Bridge. Music, according to Dibdin, had altogether degenerated during the last twenty years. Horsemanship was in fashion. Why not, thought he, combine the stage with the ring, and produce entertainments of a novel character and a higher class ? A Colonel West, of the Guards, to whom the ground belonged, was favourable to him ; proprietors were forthcoming ; a licence was obtained ; and there arose, in due time, the " Royal Circus,"—now represented by the Surrey Theatre of our own day. Colonel West, however, died ; and Dibdin was soon embroiled with his colleagues. It will amuse the reader, and illustrate the temper of the man, if we quote a single sentence from his autobiography regarding these persons :—" While the leech, HUGHES, was sucking the blood of the proprietors, and fastening on the concern, the serpent, GRIMALDI, was coiled up till a proper moment should arrive to seize the management." Who can tell the rights or wrongs of such disputes at this distance of time ? or are they worthy subjects of research ? Of other men with whom he had differences, Dibdin always speaks with an obvious wish to do justice to their point of view, even under irritation. There was an instinct of intellectual honesty about him which no competent critic can mistake. But for Hughes and Grimaldi he has nothing but loathing ; and we are inclined to think that this was one of the quarrels in which he was in the right. He gave up all connection with the Circus, the affairs of which were a source of annoyance to him for years after. To us, for our present purpose, the most interesting fact about this episode in Dibdin's life is that his song " Grog and Girls " had its birth at the Royal Circus :—

A sailor and an honest heart,
Like ship and helm, are ne'er apart ;
For how should one stem wind and tide,
If 'other should refuse to guide ?
With that she freely cuts the waves,
And so the tar,
When dashing waves around him jar,
Consults his heart, and danger braves
Where duty calls ; nor asks for more
Than grog aboard, and girl ashore.
* * * *

'Tis not that in the hottest fight
The murd'rous ball will sooner light
On him than any other spot,—
To face the cannon is his lot ;

He must of dangers have his share.
But honest tar,
Though fire, and winds, and water jar,
Consults his heart, and shakes off care ;
And when the battle's heat is o'er,
In grog aboard, drinks girl ashore.

Here we have not absolutely Dibdin's first sea-song, but the first in which his peculiar quality shows itself; a something simpler and more energetic than the then fashionable type of song, and an embodiment of what we may call his nautical philosophy. Perhaps it is as well that he failed to establish the Circus, and was thrown more and more upon himself alone. But he had another catastrophe to meet before the prosperous part of his career arrived. He planned, and began, in connection with a Mr. Leroux, a Clerkenwell justice, a theatre in St. Paneras, in the region now covered by Somers Town. "I have a hundred times," says he, "compared myself to an ant, that, when its nest is destroyed, never stands lamenting its misfortunes, but gets to work again, and either repairs the old nest or begins a new one." The new speculation was to be called Helicon; and the courageous singer went to work with spirit, planted poplars, and ran up a building. But the licence was refused; and, to crown all,—Dibdin having been called away to Southampton to attend his mother's death-bed,—a gale of wind came on, and blew his unlucky structure to the ground. Mr. Leroux completed the gale's work by helping himself to the *débris* of the edifice.

Never, as he informs us, was he "so completely driven into a corner as at this period," and it was now 1785, his fortieth year. He had broken off relations almost entirely with all the theatres. He had twice failed to establish a theatre for himself. He began to meditate going to India, where his brother, Captain Dibdin, who had become master-attendant at Nagore and a man of some property, had invited him to join him. The good captain died at the Cape, soon after the time of which we are speaking; but friends of his in India still urged Dibdin to come out and look after his affairs. To raise funds for the voyage, Dibdin resolved on making a tour through England with an entertainment. One very queer difficulty beset him in the course of this expedition—a difficulty which strongly brings home to one the vast changes that have taken place in our intercommunication in England since those days. He was constantly taken for an impostor, and had serious difficulty in convincing people in the country towns that he was the real Mr. Dibdin. The real Mr. Dibdin, he was told, was "a tall, sallow, thin old man, with a wig," whereas he was a stoutish, somewhat jolly-looking personage, wearing his own hair. One old tabby, the tea-table oracle of Worcester, told him plainly in the street that his assertion that he was Mr. Dibdin was a falsity, for that she had seen Mr. Dibdin at Birmingham, and he was a very different-looking man. The Mayor of Nottingham asked if he came with drums and trumpets, and if he was sure his entertainment would not corrupt the apprentices boys? Under these difficulties Dibdin still pursued his tour, and pub-

lished an account of it, with a distinguished subscription-list. He now sold all his songs to the music-sellers, that he might start for the East with all available funds, and the music-sellers took advantage of his position to make sordidly mean bargains with him ; for "The Waterman ; or, My Poll and My Partner Joe," they gave him two guineas ; and half a guinea for the famous stave, so familiar to our grandfathers, "Nothing like Grog."

In 1788 Charles Dibdin embarked on board ship in the river, and his first discovery was that the captain was even a worse character to deal with than the captain with whom Fielding had sailed for Lisbon thirty-four years before. "It has generally been a curious trait in my fortunes," observes Dibdin, with much naïveté, in recording these events, "to meet with men whose minds were full of depravity, and who were alike strangers to justice and humanity." If half what he tells us of this skipper be true—and we know no reason why it should be false—Dibdin did well to quit the vessel when she put into Torbay. He had been five days in the Channel in her, and this five days' cruise was the longest ever made by this our most popular English writer of sea-songs. Five days, however, of a man of genius, count for fifty days of anybody else ; and though Dibdin never became technically accurate in his use of sea-language, he had a very respectable knowledge of it for a landsman.

Having landed at Torbay—and sunk a hundred and fifty pounds to no apparent purpose—Dibdin resumed his entertainments. And he began at last to see that to concentrate himself on entertainments was his best policy. He resolved to do so ; and also opened a music-shop for the sale of his own songs, in spite of the rage of vulturous music-sellers, who denounced him as an interloper. His entertainments were held in different places—the establishment being always called *Sans Souci*. He began them in King Street, Covent Garden, with one called *The Whim of the Moment*, in 1788 ; and continued them, first in the Strand, and then at a little theatre which he (at last !) successfully created for himself in Leicester Place. The years from 1788 onwards were the most prosperous and the most productive, as far as quality is concerned, of Charles Dibdin's long and active life. His best sea-songs nearly all appeared in these entertainments, the very names of which are forgotten now. Thus "Poor Jack" and "The Sailor's Sheet-Anchor" belong to *The Whim of the Moment*; "The Flowing Can" and "Poor Tom, or the Sailor's Epitaph" to *The Oddities* (1789); "Jack at the Windlass" to *The Quizzes* (1792); and "Yo, heave ho!" to *The Tour to the Land's End* (1798). These entertainments were wholly Dibdin's own. He invented the simple machinery of story, which was the vehicle for his songs ; wrote the songs, and set them to music himself ; and sang them himself. He did not dress in character, but appeared before his audience (a pleasant-looking, gentlemanlike man, with a keen dark eye) in the blue coat, white waistcoat, black silk stockings, and breeches, of the old régime. He played his own accompaniment on an instrument—part piano, part organ—which was fitted up with gongs and bells, by which a variety of

effect could be produced when necessary. Thus the amusement was an intellectual one, depending, like those of the elder Mathews and the late Mr. Albert Smith, on the performer's individual talents and accomplishments. But its influence was not confined within its own limits, nor to amusement strictly so called. The songs which Dibdin wrote and sang there winged their way over the whole country. Great singers like Incledon, who almost swore by Dibdin, performed them to delighted crowds. They were heard in drawing-rooms and at supper-tables, in theatres and at concerts. And as the mighty Revolutionary War progressed, and England warmed into a red heat of patriotic pride and furious Anti-Gallicanism, the singer, who had begun as a rather watery Anacreon, rose into something of an Alceæus or Tyrtæus. Crowds listened to him with the eagerness of the shades gathering round Alceæus, in Horace's famous ode :—

Pugnas et exactos tyrannos
Densum humeris bibit aure vulgus.

Dibdin is, indeed, called the Tyrtæus of the war by so high an authority as the *Edinburgh Review* of 1823. He had then been just nine years dead. The praise is extravagant, no doubt, but it is valuable, as showing the opinion of contemporaries.

Up to this period—that of the revolutionary war—comparatively little had been done for the representation of *any* side of naval life in our literature. The admirable novels of Smollett had made a worthy beginning, and they have certainly not been surpassed since, for truthfulness, shrewdness, and a broad hearty humour,—a humour always vigorous and pungent, but which could be,—as in the description of the last hours of Commodore Trunnon—tender also. We have a sea song or two earlier than Smollett, such as the lively doggerel on the action in which Benbow received his death-wound; the pleasant comic stanzas of Lord Dorset written during the Dutch wars of the Restoration; and the “scurvy tune,” which Stephano sings in the *Tempest*. Nay, we may remount to Chaucer’s “Shipman” for proof that the fundamental basis of the traditional naval character of our humourists had been laid down in our literature very early :—

And certainly he was a good felaw.
Ful many a draught of win he hadde draw
From Burdeux ward, while that the chapman slepe
Of nice conscience toke he no kepe.

* * * *

Hardy he was, and wise, I undertake :
With many a tempest hadde his berd be shake.

Dibdin may thus be said to have followed up a tradition; but—like the Navy itself of the Great War for that matter—he added as much to the tradition as he derived from it. And this was natural enough; for although Abercrombie and Aboukir must never be forgotten, the naval glories of the epoch belonged to the first part of the war, as the military glories to the conclusion of it. The battles of the First of June, St. Vincent,

Camperdown, the Nile, and Trafalgar, were all fought within less than a dozen years. Hence, there was a perpetual inspiration given to a songwriter whose forte lay in naval song; besides which, Dibdin had not only seen the generation of Rodney, but could remember the generation of Hawke. Luckily too, the earliest triumphs of the successful period of his career were made with nautical songs, with "Poor Jack," and "The Greenwich Pensioner," the latter of which sold more than ten thousand copies, just at the time his entertainments began. In "Poor Jack," he strikes the characteristic chord of his distinctive lyrical instrument:—

D'y'e mind me, a sailor should be every inch
 All as one as a piece of the ship,
 And with her brave the world without offering to flinch
 From the moment the anchor's a-trip.
 As for me, in all weathers, all times, sides, and ends,
 Nought's a trouble from duty that springs;
 For my heart is my Poll's, and my rhino's my friend's,
 And as for my life, 'tis the King's:
 Even when my time comes, ne'er believe me so soft
 As for grief to be taken aback,
 For the same little cherub that sits up aloft
 Will look out a good berth for Poor Jack!

We may remark, in this long popular song, not only its homely freshness and humour, and manly moral tone, but a dramatic power which was of the essence of Dibdin's genius. He had, like Burns and Béranger, though in an inferior degree, (for he has left nothing equal to "The Jolly Beggars," or "Les Souvenirs du Peuple,") the power not only of expressing an emotion, but of fixing, in form and colour, a character or scene. His ideal Jack Tar is now and then theatrical,—and it is the reproach of the modern stage that we say "theatrical" when we mean artificial and unreal. Nay, when the utilitarian value of the songs came to be seen, and they were served out to keep up patriotism and dispel mutinous feeling,—like lime-juice as a preventive of scurvy,—a certain factitious character, pointed out before in this Magazine, came to attach to them. There is, in fact, some theatrical exaggeration,—a painting of the blue deeper than the blue of nature,—something recalling T. P. Cooke, rather than the Navy, to men who really know the Navy,—about the sea-songs of Dibdin. But this does not belong to them universally; while, to resume what we were saying of his dramatic force, as distinct from his theatrical cleverness and the results of his theatrical associations, his Jack Tar is a living figure. He did not, at least when at his best, exhibit a mere marionette, in a Guernsey frock, a pig-tail, and duck trowsers, at *Sans Souci*. He held sound principles of art. "A ballad," he declares, "considered as a lyric composition, without which distinction it has but little worth, is a very superior kind of poem, and demands a degree of genius and inspiration that can neither be taught nor explained; and for the composition of music necessary to give force and effect to such words, the mind shuns everything affected and fantastic, and seeks an asylum in the bosom of Nature." (*Professional*

Life, by Himself, vol. iii., p. 42.) This is good doctrine, and in his best songs he carries it into practice. We could hardly have a better specimen of his simpler and prettier manner than the one we shall now transcribe, viz., his

LOVELY NAN.

Sweet is the ship that, under sail,
Spreads her white bosom to the gale ;
Sweet, oh ! sweet the flowing ear ;
Sweet to poise the labouring oar,
That tugs us to our native shore,
When the boatswain pipes the barge to man ;
Sweet sailing with a fav'ring breeze ;
But oh ! much sweeter than all these,
Is Jack's delight—his lovely Nan.

The needle, faithful to the North,
To show of constancy the worth,
A curious lesson teaches man :
The needle time may rust, the squall
Capsize the binnacle and all,
Let seamanship do all it can ;
My love in worth shall higher rise,
Nor time shall rust, nor squalls capsize,
My faith and truth to lovely Nan.

When in the bilboes I was penn'd
For serving of a worthless friend,
And every creature from me ran ;
No ship performing quarantine
Was ever so deserted seen,
None hail'd me—woman, child, nor man ;
But though false friendship's sails were furl'd,
Though cut adrift by all the world,
I'd all the world in lovely Nan.

I love my duty, love my friend,
Love truth and merit to defend,
To moan their loss who hazard ran ;
I love to take an honest part,
Love beauty, with a spotless heart,
By manners love to show the man ;
To sail through life by honour's breeze—
'Twas all along of loving these
First made me dote on lovely Nan.

Not to relish this pleasant little song would show an equal want of heart and ear. It has natural sentiment, without exaggeration ; a touch of point, without epigrammatic glitter ; and just nautical colour enough,—a flavour of salt,—while occasionally Dibdin almost pedantically affects the technical language of seamanship. It is this pedantry that betrays him sometimes into blunders analogous to those of the gentlemen who will quote Latin and Greek without knowing them. Thus, in “Grieving's a Folly”—a hearty rollicking song enough—we find,—

One night as we drove with two reefs in the main-sail,
And the scud came on low'ring upon a lee-shore,
Jack went up aloft for to hand the top ga'nt-sail,
A spray wash'd him off, and we ne'er saw him more.

But the top-gallant sails would have been taken in long before it came to double-reefing the courses :—unless, to be sure, in the case of a Turkish squadron we once saw in the Mediterranean, where the breeze having freshened, the men could not be got to go aloft for that purpose, and the officers had to cut away the whole business with axes or tomahawks. Again, in “ Saturday Night,” the bard informs us, that,—

For all the world just like the ropes aboard a ship—

Each man’s rigged out

A vessel stout,

To take for life a trip.

The shrouds, the stays, the braces,

Are joys, and hopes, and fears ;

The halliards, sheets, and traces,

Still, as each passion veers,

And whim prevails,

Direct the sails,

As on the sea of life he steers.

Yet the halliards and sheets have nothing to do with *directing* the sails, while the braces, to which he assigns a different set of functions, have. “ Sheet ” seems an unlucky word for song-writers. Allan Cunningham, in a well-known song, talks of—

A wet sheet and a flowing sea,

evidently not knowing that a sheet is a rope. “ Honest Allan’s ” whole stanza, however, is absurd, for his ship is flying *before* a wind that follows fast, and he makes her leave old England “ on the lee.” A still more extraordinary error of Dibdin’s occurs in “ The Token ” :—

The breeze was fresh, the ship *in stays*,

Each breaker hush’d, the shore a haze,

When Jack no more on duty call’d,

His true love’s tokens overhail’d.

Surely a man who took so much interest in sailors, and wrote so much about them, must have known what a ship’s being “ *in stays* ” means ? Our next sample is more excusable :—

The squall tore the main-sail to shivers,

Helm a-weather the hoarse boatswain cries,

—though Dibdin ought to have known that *conning* the ship is no part of the duty of a boatswain.

More minute criticism would easily find other slips of this kind. But, on the whole, they interfere very little with the merit of Dibdin’s songs, which though accepted and enjoyed among sailors, were still more directly addressed to the world at large, before whose eyes they held up a good ideal of the nautical character and so strengthened the popularity of the service. When we consider what that ideal was, and how broad the humour in the sunshine of which Dibdin set it forth, we feel that our lot has been cast upon a much more rigid generation. The virtues of Dibdin’s blue-jacket are social and, above all, professional virtues. He is to be loyal, brave, cheerful, truth-telling, generous ; but his morality in other respects is most indulgently

viewed. It is accepted as a matter of course that he shall squander his pay upon "Grog and Girls;" and all that possible improvement in his condition which our Sailors' Homes, &c., are established to effect, is totally ignored. "Jack in his Element" sings to the following tune :—

I've a spanking wife at Portsmouth Gates,
A pigmy at Goree,
An orange-tawny up the Straits,
A black at St. Lucie :
Thus, whatsomdever course I bend,
I lead a jovial life,
In every mess I find a friend,
In every port a wife.
* * * * *
Thus be we sailors all the go,
On fortune's sea we rub ;
We works and loves, and fights the foe,
And drinks the generous bub.
Storms that the masts to splinters rend,
Can't shake our jovial life ;
In every mess we find a friend,
In every port a wife.

Those whose naval experience is old enough to reach back to the time when Trafalgar men were still to be found afloat, are not likely to forget the legends of the age which Dibdin painted. The Navy had a system of ethics of its own which might well appal Exeter Hall—though, we venture to say, that it was less corrupting than many a fashionable novel of our own time. "The Service" and its efficiency was pretty well all that commanding officers took into consideration ; and for the rest they were content to hope with Nelson, in one of his letters, that there was a large allowance made for them in the other world. They flogged a man, not for drunkenness, but for being drunk *on duty*. That he should get drunk on shore was accepted as a mere matter of course. Indeed, we are ourselves old enough to remember a seaman serving afloat, who regularly, as the anniversary of a famous action in which he had been engaged came round, used to appear on the quarter-deck and respectfully ask permission to get drunk ! Never did the worthy man neglect to avail himself of his captain's indulgence. As for Poll and Nan, the captains of the old school were equally tolerant. If a lass's fingers were pretty, they did not look too closely at them for a wedding ring ; and our ships swarmed in harbour with the "wives," "aunts," "sisters," and "cousins" of all hands. These respectable family appellations were the "homage," to use Rochefoucauld's famous maxim, that the service paid to the prevailing religion of the country. And if you asked a captain about it all, he could only shrug his shoulders and say, "What am I to do ? If the men go ashore, I shall lose a lot of them ; and the ship must be manned." In a certain case, where two men-of-war were lying together—at Spithead, if our memory serves us—the captain of one of them set his face against this flux of visitors, while his neighbour permitted it freely. In an hour or two the crew of the inhospitable gentleman's vessel were in a state of mutiny, and he hurried

off in great excitement to report the fact to the port admiral. The port admiral belonged to "the old school" himself, and acted with decision. The moment he knew the circumstances, he hoisted a signal, "Fifty women from the 'Vengeance' to be sent to the 'Bellerophon,'" and order was speedily restored. Such was the Navy of which Dibdin was at once the *Tyrtæus* and the *Anacreon*. He performed both parts with spirit; and one cannot wonder that the *Hannah More* school should have protested against such a bard's being countenanced by the Government. Dibdin was put in the index, in the very first issue of tracts produced by the evangelical reaction of the close of the last century. That reaction told upon the navy as everywhere else; but the decay of Dibdin's influence there has been less due to it, than to the wider changes comprehended in a transition from war to peace, from sailing-ships to steamers and ironclads. His sea-songs are in great part war-songs, which in time of peace lose their interest; they are also, in great part, songs of an epoch and a school. He does not reach the standard of a singer for all time, though he is a genuine singer within his range, and allowing for his limitations.

In the days of our grandfathers, however, Dibdin was unquestionably a power, and a beneficent and patriotic one. He was so fertile that he declares himself to have written nine hundred songs; and so punctual and energetic in his business that "no apology," he assures us, "was ever made for his non-attendance" during two-and-forty years. He asserts, likewise, at a period when no such assertion could have been falsely made with impunity, that his "songs had been quoted in mutinies to the restoration of order and discipline." But the proof that his influence as an Anti-Jacobin and Anti-Gallican writer was real and considerable, is his having received a pension in 1808 from Pitt's Government,—a Government slow to acknowledge literary merit; and the Scotch department of which, a few years before, had allowed Burns to live and die a gauger. This pension of 200*l.* was withdrawn by the administration which followed, and only a part of it restored not long before his death, in 1814. One supposed reason of this was his publication of a song pleading the cause of the "hardy tars," whose sufferings were much less interesting to the Admiralty than their enthusiasm when needed for service. But, as far as we know, this explanation is conjectural. Dibdin was probably only sacrificed, like scores of the gallant fellows whose prowess he celebrated and whose leisure he cheered, to his want of parliamentary or family connections. Be that as it may, the loss was disastrous to him, and he found it impossible to regain his position. He had sold his theatre on the strength of the pension, in 1805, and retired to Cranford. He was forced to resume his entertainments and again to open a music-shop in 1808, in his sixty-third year,—he who had begun public life while he was still in a jacket! After a struggle, the long career of the veteran—itself no bad counterpart of the stormy and strifeful career of the men-of-war's men—the "Tom Toughs" and "Tom Tackles," whom he sang—ended in bankruptcy. A subscription was raised for him in 1810, and on the small proceeds of

this he again went into retirement in Arlington Street, Camden Town. Paralysis came upon him the year before his death, and he died on July 25, 1814, after a period of bodily helplessness, and, we fear, of privation. The *Gentleman's Magazine*, in recording the event, speaks of "the influence of his songs upon our gallant tars" as an acknowledged and familiar fact. Of his private life it says that he was "improvident," but his improvidence, it adds, "chiefly appeared in a too hospitable style of living," for "he was never a gamester, nor addicted to the bottle." It is to be regretted that we cannot speak of his domestic life with commendation. He had excellent qualities, as has been amply shown already, and he did good service in his time to England and English literature. But in a professed biographical sketch it is wrong to omit any important feature of a man's history; and it must be honestly narrated of Charles Dibbin, that after his first marriage he formed an illicit connection with a chorus-singer at Drury Lane, Mrs. Davenet, by whom he was father of Charles and Thomas Dibbin, also song-writers and dramatists; and that he deserted his mistress for another woman, as he had deserted his wife for his first mistress.* He afterwards married the successor of Mrs. Davenet, who, as well as her daughter, survived him. To them, it must be added, he was constant and tender; and they placed on his modest tombstone, in St. Martin's, Camden Town, the celebrated verses from his "Tom Bowling:"—

His form was of the manliest beauty,
His heart was kind and soft,
Faithful, below, he did his duty,
But now he 's gone aloft.

To part of this high praise Dibbin was certainly entitled; and there are many epitaphs which are wholly false. He rests in a bleak church-yard, now closed,—originally a colony of the dead removed from the parish of St. Martin's to that of St. Pancras, and situated just on the north side of Pratt Street, Camden Town. His monument, enclosed in a railing, stands as nearly as possible in the centre, and close to a somewhat dismal willow tree. An admirer planted a bay-tree at the head of the grave a few years ago; but according to "the gardener of that ground" it does not thrive,—perhaps from some occult sympathy with the waning renown of "the poor inhabitant below." Let us hope that there is a period of renewed life in store for the bay and the singer. Dibbin's songs and memory are things that we should be sorry to let die,—the rather that a Dibbin for Ironclads is a kind of poet whom we are not likely to see arise during the remainder of our pilgrimage.

* *Memoir* by GEORGE HOGARTH, p. xxii., xxiii. "I never offended my father in my life . . ." writes Thomas Dibbin in his *Autobiography*, ". . . but I never received a shilling from him." (Vol. ii., p. 226.)

A v o n h o e.

That which a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

CHAPTER I.

A V O N H O E.



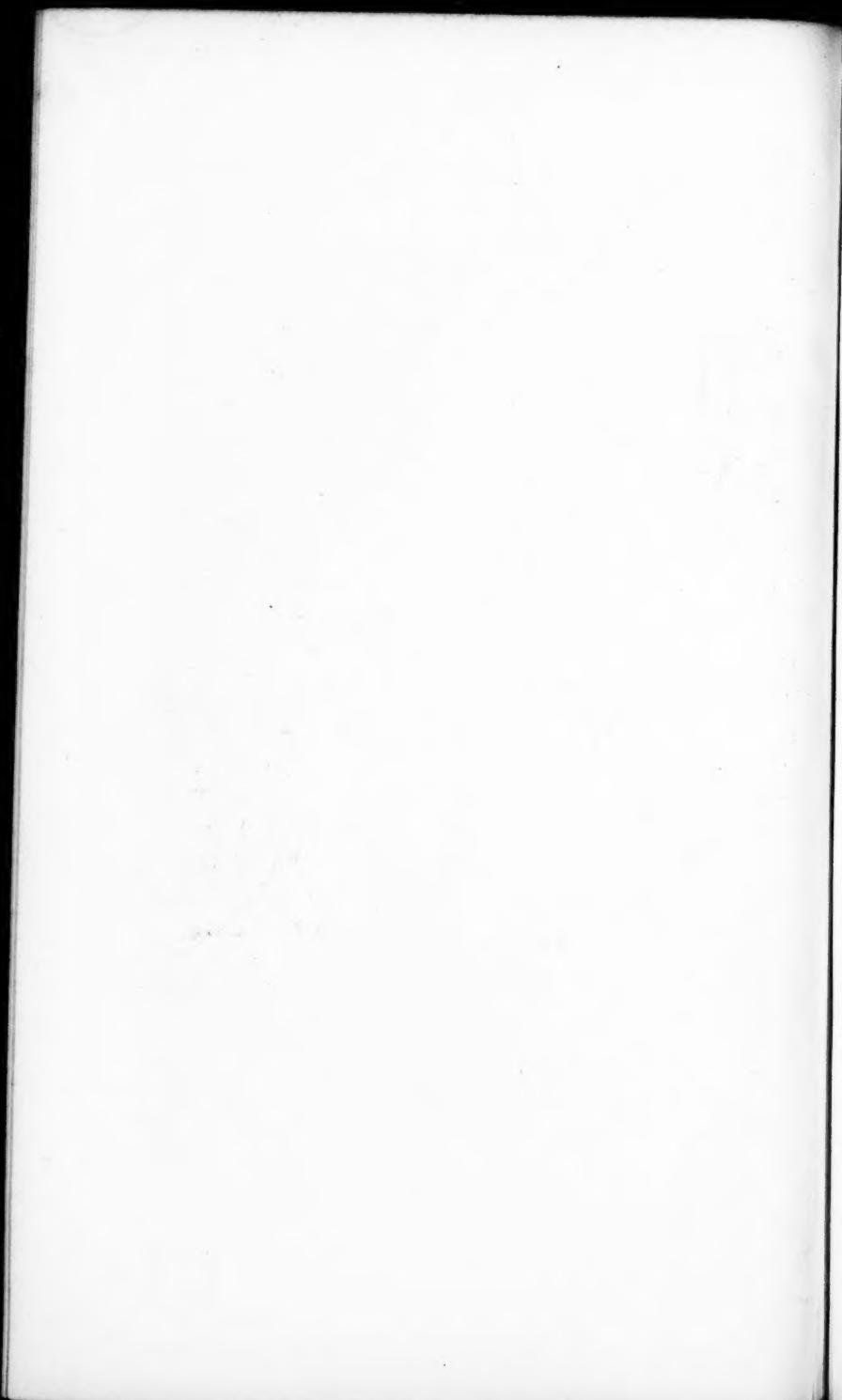
HAT which strikes a foreigner most in the general aspect of England is the evidence of the long absence of struggle and war shown by the un-walled villages, the scattered cottages, the undefended country-houses. In Germany the traveller crosses mile after mile of cultivated land without a habitation, then he reaches a miserable mass of wretched streets, shut in by confining walls with an armed gateway, and a castle which has either been at perpetual war with the village, or its most exacting protector. In France, in the same way, the cottages seem to have clung together like sheep for help, under the shelter of some seigneur who has too often been their worst foe.

In England every man has lived so long under the shadow of his own apple-tree and gooseberry-bush, that we have forgotten how much wretchedness we have been spared. As an old soldier who had been in most of the later European wars once said, pointing to the trunk of an old white rose against a cottage which certainly had not attained such a size under a hundred years, "Tiens!" said he, "what a tale that tells! Oh, if you could conceive the havoc when friend as well as foe cuts and tears down for fuel, and pillages for food, even if he pays! but you have never heard or seen such things in England, and do not even know how much you have to be thankful for!"

There is one district, however, even in England, which was so well fought over at the time of our last trial of the kind, that even yet cannon-balls and bits of armour (strange combination for our ideas of war) are turned up by the plough. The old manor-houses are full of papers connected with the period: old portraits, curious tombs, brasses, relics



"AND HOT HIM I' THE HEAD AS HE LAY.



of all kinds abound. It is a very historical region ; the stirring nature of the events has left such impress on the country that they are still its most important feature, and no modern manufacturing towns nor trim "gentlemen's seats" have as yet laid waste the old memories. Two hundred years have pretty nearly effaced the traces of the civil wars elsewhere, but looking over the wide plain which stretches far and fertile in the centre of England, one cannot but think continually of the fierce fights which once raged there.

A number of promontories or headlands, many miles apart, stand out in the sea of plain, flat as the sea itself, and where it must once have rolled. On one "the king" occupied a camp ; another was the look-out of Cromwell ; far off is a lone house which was defended by a lady and cannonaded in no chivalrous spirit by Prince Rupert ; on a fourth was fought one of the most important battles of the war ; while at Avonhoe lie the foundations and remains of rather a large manor-house, fortified by its owner, "a most true and loyal gentleman," taken after a regular siege by "Colonel Cromwell," and burnt down on the approach of the king's forces. It had been rebuilt and again pulled down in later times.

In the excessive flatness of the valley a small eminence tells, and though hardly to be called a hill in a really hilly country, there was something very beautiful in the little headland, which stood out boldly with a steep side to the plain. The remains of an old avenue of very large trees led along the top of the hill to where once the house had stood, with its terraces and gardens all plainly marked in the great green carpet of grass, but hardly a stone of which remained one on another. Behind it stood a beautiful and elaborately carved church, strangely out of keeping with the few wretched scattered cottages which were all that remained of the little settlement. It looked more like a dainty college chapel than a village church, and though utterly neglected, and in some places almost ruinous, the carved woodwork, the altar, tombs, brasses, and stone canopies, the painted glass of the enormous Henry VII. windows, testified to the former grandeur of the family who had reared it.

The great house stood back a little with its dependencies (God's house included), and sheltered from the wind ; but on the extreme point of the hill, in the most exposed place it could find, stood a little old farmhouse, so small indeed that nowadays it would hardly rank above a cottage. The time for small kingdoms is evidently at an end. Of how many sovereignties are England and France composed, not to mention the Italy and Germany which we have seen grow up under our own eyes ? The big rat is eating out the little rat everywhere, and the little mill and the small farm are fast going the way of the Dukes of Parma and the Kings of Hanover.

Benyam, that is Benjamin the son of Amaziah (his surname, Pangbourne, might as well have not existed, for it was never used),^{*} the

* Surnames fifty years ago were almost as uncommon in the district as in the days of the Plantagenets.

farmer who lived at Hawk's Hill, had about forty acres, and rated himself and his position highly. In those days there were few people to dispute it within reach, and those few he looked down upon, none the less that there was a cloud upon his house. His daughter had come back with a child after having been out as dairymaid for two or three years. She had originally gone to a squire's house in the neighbourhood, but had been sent down far into the north to some relations of the family. When she returned home she would give no explanation, made no excuses for herself, would listen to no reproof, but was sullen and obstinate like her father. She was a tall, strong-made woman, with very handsome features, but a fierce expression, and those determined cold blue eyes which are so much more alarming than dark ones, because the lightning does not gather and flash and go out, but broods and lives on.

After the first burst of passion was over, Benyam was rather glad to have her home again. One son had died, and another had wandered off to seek his fortune, and he wanted help with the cows—it saved a dairymaid. The butter, which is the staple of the county, was packed in baskets and left overnight under a hedge, for the carrier to pick up in his rounds, for the consumption of some distant great town, and the primitive manners of the district made it as safe as in the locked dairy, where Cecily had again returned to the skimming and washing and shaping and stirring which make women's lives in dairy countries so hard—"for butter is a very perjineketty thing," as Mrs. Benyam often observed, "and very often doesn't come as it did a ought to."

It was a cold stormy winter's morning, with a threatening of snow, and she was preparing to go to the shop. The only opening for this important sphere of action was a wretched huckster's in a wretched village some four miles off, to be reached only over the field-roads and across a wild sort of half common, half moor, called the "Seech." It was an outing, however, that Mrs. Benyam by no means liked to lose, for it was the single occasion on which she saw the outside world. She generally rode on a cart-horse in state, as befitted the wife of a farmer, a lady of distinction; but the nag was lame, and she had waited till supplies had run rather short of the few things they required which they did not either grow or make for themselves.

"You'll ha' snow before night and be cotched," said Benyam, sullenly, as he saw her preparing to depart.

"You'd best not go to-day, mother," said Cecily, looking out at the grey weather, which was gathering over the wide view at their feet.

"Ye both on ye want to rob me my outing," answered the old woman sourly.

Cecily had made an effort in offering to go, for she heartily disliked being seen in the village, and she turned away fiercely when her offer was thus met.

Her boy, a magnificent broad-shouldered child, just able to run and get into mischief, came into the room as his grandmother left it; but

there was no gleam of tenderness on his mother's face. He had got hold of the stocking which she was knitting, she snatched it from him and gave him a violent slap ; the boy's look at her was more of anger than fear before he burst into a sob of pain, and his grandfather calling out, "if the little devil didn't hold his tongue he'd wring his neck for 'im," Cecily carried him off struggling and screaming, and shut him up in the empty house-place. It was not a happy household at Hawk's Hill.

Mrs. Benyam had been rather late in starting ; the snow held off longer than they expected, but towards evening it began to fall, in large slow flakes at first, then faster and faster, and a driving wind arose—the pitiless, searching blast which takes away the courage to fight for life with the snow.

"Don't ye see her a coming?" said Cecily, as she stood watching the thick flakes, which shut out even the grey sky, while her father came in once or twice as he drove the sheep into shelter and foddered the cows, as if he expected by some sort of magic to find his wife within.

"She's stopped at the shop," he said, decidedly, as he stood running his fingers through his wet hair, evidently not liking to face the question or the storm.

Cecily shook her head. "The snow didn't begin till she'd a started hum," she said. "I'll go up to the Church cottages. Simon Martin the ratcatcher were there at his daughter's, and the dogs along wi' him, and I'll axe him for to go with ye, and Jared mun be made ring the storm-bell."

It was a struggle to fight her way, even when she reached the comparative shelter of the avenue to the church : the cutting wind seemed to pierce into her like a knife.

It was hard work to rout out old Jared the sexton. "Storm-bells! There ain't no need o' storm-bells, not yet," said he, sullenly. But she insisted, and presently the strange weird sound of the bells rung backwards—a sort of tocsin to guide the wanderers over the "Seech"—arose in the dark air. But Mrs. Benyam did not appear. At length, as the night fell, the wind lulled, and a splendid moon arose—which, reflected from the brilliant new-fallen snow, made everything as bright as by day, but with a sad, cold, strange look, like the features of a face one knows and loves changed and set by death. Benyam by this time had been round to the cottages, and collected two or three men to help him. They were wet and tired after a hard day's work, but, with that unconscious self-sacrifice which is so touching among the poor, no man refused the risk or the pains for his neighbour. Keener senses than theirs, however, were wanted in the difficult work.

"Quick," said her master to a shaggy sheep-dog, small and light and wiry, and who looked far the most sensible and sagacious of the company, "search, lass, search!" and she set to work in a most business-like manner. It was a toilsome task ; the snow had hardly had time to harden, and they sank sometimes up to the waist in the drifts, while the

cruel, remorseless white fleecy bed lay so pure, so light, so innocent, as if it were the most harmless thing in creation.

At length they reached the "Seech," a wide dreary open sedgy moorland, across which the cold drifts were driven, without any break or protection. It is now enclosed and converted into rich corn-fields; but agriculture had not much changed the face of the country in that district fifty years ago. It was probably in exactly the same state as when Cromwell, as told by tradition, making a (royal) progress through his dominions, was met and entreated to take a day's hawking by the mayor and burgesses of the nearest town—"which his highness was graciously pleased to accept." The ground was intersected with many water-courses, so that to wander from the road in such weather was almost certain death for an aged woman.

"'Tis no use a goin' any further," said old Simon; "the moor on all sides is one with the road. She ain't alive surely, an she hadn't got as fur as this."

They stood still for a moment, looking out on the moorland stretching far before them, bare and lonely: there was a peculiar wildness and desolation about it: they called, but the booming of a bittern, roused by the dogs, was the only sound in answer. A group of weird old thorns, driven by the wind and tangled against the lee side, casting delicate pale blue shadows on the snow in the moonlight, stood just on the edge of the Seech, and alongside them a great heap of stones, commonly called the grave of the Gipsey King, but which probably had existed as a cairn in times very much older. Suddenly Quick began to scratch and whine, and whisk her shaggy tail; the other dogs followed her, and from under the thick-set boughs, which had kept a space for breath, the old woman was dug out, with still a little life left in her. She had got through the most difficult part of her journey, and had fallen, as so often happens, when the worst was comparatively over.

"Eh, we had a sore time a gettin' of her home," said Simon, "for all she weren't so very heavy. I mind when she were a fine lusty maid, that was she! but women they falls away like butter before the sun, bytimes," he went on rather sadly. He lived in a dairy country, and his similes savoured accordingly. "She mourned so when we riz her over the drifts as 'twere pitiful," said the old man, when with great difficulty they reached Hawk's Hill.

CHAPTER II.

THE GOOD OLD TIMES.

MRS. BENYAM recovered, but only so far as to sit up racked with rheumatism, bound to her arm-chair, by the great old chimney corner. The house was built in almost the oldest form of dwelling still existing. Great trunks of trees—shaped with the axe, not the saw—were planted in the ground, and rested against each other at the top of the house, arching

over like the timbers of a ship turned topsy-turvy. It was as if the builders were afraid the upper story might be blown off if not thus bound together with the one beneath—a style of architecture belonging, it is said, to the fourteenth century.

The kitchen where she sat was large and long, and low and dark, with the window at one end and the fireplace at the other, very dreary. Great brown beams held up a sort of rack over her head, whence hung the strings of onions, the flitches of bacon, dried herbs, the whole larder and still-room. On an old dark oak dresser, with twisted columns and a beautiful carved cornice, which had evidently come at some period out of the big house, stood the plate, art and literature of the family—*Dialogues of Devils*, a “Breeches Bible,” much unused, and *Zadkiel’s Prophetic Almanac* (prophecies of the future seem to have particular interest for people who cannot understand much of the present); while art was represented by the portrait of a murderer framed, and two painted plaisters of a lady in blue hat and red and yellow garments, and a gentleman in top-boots.

Year after year the old woman lived on, with everything about her kept beautifully clean by Cecily, who cared for her scrupulously, but always in her cold hard manner. “ ‘Tis a’most all my labour for to wait o’ her,” said she. Mrs. Benyam’s only real comfort was in the child: he kept her from dying of her forced inaction and ennui, and she was the nearest approach to a playfellow, with all her fretful crossness, that the small Rupert (Robert his grandfather always called him “for contrairiness”) had ever had.

She wore a black silk bonnet over her mob-cap and an old red cloak—which last, however, she put on very unwillingly. “ ‘Twere my mother’s, and ‘tis nigh on seventy years old, and I wants to kip it for my best, for when I’m old and wants it,” said she.

“ You’ll never want it more nor now,” answered Cecily, shortly, wrapping it round her as she sat in her great chair with a staff in her hand, and the black cat opposite her, by the low fire on the hearth supported by iron dogs, and with a queer wrought-iron back or “reredos,” against which the fuel was built. She looked like a respectable old witch with her familiar. It was a striking old face, though the nose and chin were now fast approaching each other—with plenty of power in it both for thought and feeling—all, however, unused.

The little boy sat close by her on a small three-legged stool: he was a turbulent, self-willed child in general, but he would sometimes keep by her side for a long time together, looking preternaturally solemn and considerate, as he listened to her talk, fitful under such circumstances.

They were on terms of the most perfect equality. The difference between seventy and four years old might perhaps give the grandmother a certain superiority in mere knowledge of the world and authority; but then Rupert had an uncommonly sturdy little pair of legs, and the power of locomotion restored the balance between them, or even inclined it to his side.

“ You give over pulling them tongs about like that,” said she; “ you’ll knock down they hosen o’ yer grampy’s, and they’ll get burnt.”

"I shan't," answered the child. "I likes to pull the tongs about."

"Then I'll give yer the stick," observed his grandmother, "and ye won't like that."

"Ye can't get at me," said he, moving hastily back, stool and all, out of her reach, with a kitten in his arms, which got much pinched in the retreat.

"Don't ye squeedge the kitten like that, Ruby; 'twill hurt her."

"I likes to hurt her," replied he; "it makes her holler, and I likes to hear her holler."

A child is often cruel from the mere love of action, doing something, the new sense of exercising power.

"Then I hope she'll scratch ye," said the old woman, as the old cat came to the rescue, and in the fight which ensued, right and the kitten decidedly got the best of it, to the great advantage of morality.

"What's all that noise about?" said Cecily, hearing the uproar and coming down upon them; but the confederates knew better than to give each other up to the enemy, and preferred settling their quarrels between themselves.

"It ain't nothing at all," muttered the grandmother; "only play. He's a beautiful child he is, and never so much as howled when he burnt his fingers a messin' wi' the kittle yesterday, for all he's only in his five."

"Why did ye let him touch it?" replied Cecily, by no means in a tender tone. "Ye lets 'im do a vast o' things we never was suffered to, when we was little uns."

"Ye're so hard," cried the old woman; "ye don't care a mossel for 'im, no more nor he weren't yourn. I can't think how 'tis."

Mrs. Benyam grew weaker, but she still clung to her corner. One cold late spring two or three years later she was cowering over the fire, suffering more even than usual from the bitter March wind. "'Tis so cold, I can't get scarce any het in me. I'm shiverin' and shakin' like a little bird wi'out its feathers, all along I'm so close to the fire," was the chief burden of the poor old woman's discourse, "and my teeth so anguish when they joggles together. I've a heerd tell," she said, "as there were a man as lived in the woods like, near upon dirty Denford, in a sorter hole or cave as 'twere. I can't think how he done it: it must ha' been so cold a livin' like that wi'out a 'ruff' (roof) to his head; and he went up and down for to get him his livin', asking o' them as 'ud give, and specially he begged bits o' leather, they says, and he cobbled um all together, and made hisself a vesture and shoes; there's a great big shoe o' hisn kept somewhere, they says, for a show."

"And what for did he do like that, granny?" said the child.

"They say as he were one what cut off the king's head wi' a sward,*

* The executioner of Charles I. (who was masked, and therefore not known) is reported by tradition to have lived as a hermit in a cave near the "Seech."

long fur time ago, and after that he were afraid, and so he went and lived like that there. But then he mun at least ha' had some wood; can't yer grampy find a bit o' wood nowhere left?"

"There ain't anything scarce left to burn," said Cecily; "the boy'd best go out clatting."

In the utter absence of fuel in those midland counties, where coal was almost worth its weight in gold, the cakes of manure were set up against each other in the fields, dried in the wind and sun of March, and burnt in all the cottages—a word had even been invented for their production.

"It's colder this spring nor it's been all winter," shivered the old woman. "'I shan't climb up May hill' * this year anyhow. Ain't there nothing better but only them nasty clats?"

"There's the bean-haulms," said the boy, going and fetching in an armful, which just flared up and left the dull fire smouldering on with a disagreeable smell, almost as before. "I can't find a bit o' wood left in the skillen" (outhouse), added he, sorrowfully.

"You'd best go to bed, mother," said Cecily.

"It's so dull in bed," answered she, crossly. "I likes to be wi' the boy. He tells me a wonderful deal o' things, and you never tells me nothing. I never should ha' heerd as the sheep had a had three lambs, nor as there'd been a man nigh murdered, abused shameful, at Sainton, nor nothing as is nice to know, if it hadn't been along o' he. He's a wisome child he is, and I won't go to bed not till sundown," added she, angrily. "It's all because ye want to tight up the house a bit sooner as ye sends me away like that."

It was melancholy work in winter, and every one went to bed soon after dark to keep any living warmth in them. Indeed, the same thing is told of the Oxford students hardly above a couple of centuries before. Chimneys are of late invention: they only existed in great halls and kitchens even in Elizabeth's day; and the young men at college, it is recorded, had often, like Mrs. Benyam, to go to bed in order not to "perish of cold."

At that moment Benyam came in from the farmyard.

"I must take a smoke anyhow for to warm me," said the old man, going up to the dresser to fumble for some tobacco. As he did so he caught sight of some eggs hidden behind a plate, which Rupert was collecting to thread upon a string.

"What's that nasty rubbish?" said he. "I shall just toom † all that away"—and he flung them into the fire. "A wasting yer time like that with them things!"

"I blowed un when I were out shepherding, for pastime," answered the poor boy, as he flung out of the door, "and it didn't do no hurt to nobody," he cried.

* A common proverb when old people cannot live over the spring.

† "Toom," empty—WICKLIFFE.

"Ye'r' so cross in yer maggots as it's enough to turn a dog sick," said his grandmother, angrily, kindling in his defence. "Going for to daunt the child, blaring on him like that, and he haven't so much as shod a tear with it!"

After her own fashion the old woman cared for the boy, and did her best for him. She instructed him in theology, natural science, and philosophy. She taught him what were lucky signs—for instance, never to turn a dumbledore (humble bee) out of the house; what were charms to make the butter come when bewitched, not to tread on a fairy ring, and to say his prayers, *i.e.* to repeat—

There are four angels round my head,
There are four postes to my bed, &c.;

and when indeed "May hill" was too much for her, and she died in the spring, Rupert felt that his best friend and protector had passed away in her. His was a dumb grief, however, and whatever Cecily might feel on the subject, she had neither the wish nor perhaps even the power to put it into words.

A few days after her burial old Simon the ratcatcher looked in, with various wonderful contrivances in wire over his shoulders, and a moving bag, which looked exceedingly uncanny, containing his ferrets; while his two sober, staid, sad-looking dogs, weighed down as it were with responsibilities of rats, followed at his heels. "I'm a goin' to Farmer Ashe's," said he, "and as I were so nigh I thought I might jist look in to ye. Any rats wanted here?" (catching understood.)

"None to-day," answered Benyam, who rather liked the old man; "but you'll ha' a few broth. Cecily'll make it ready in a minit," he said, turning to his daughter, who began to prepare a meagre mixture of bread and herbs and water.

"And Simon," said she, as she filled the wooden bowl, "if ye be a goin' to Sainton, ask Master Mayden what for he haven't a sent the calico cloth, as they did a ought to by the butter-carrier."

"What for didn't ye bring it yerself?" observed her father, angrily.

"They hadn't but about two yards, and I wanted seven. Ye haven't a got a shirt to yer back, nor the boy neither," said Cecily, shortly.

"And I don't like they new-fangled cottons. Linen were my father's wear, and linen shall be mine. Irish for gentlefolk, dowlas* for we—three ells seven shillings to the shirt 't has allays been."

"It ain't to be had now," answered Cecily, rather sharply, "so ye can't get it."

"And so yer old woman's gone at last," said Simon, looking up from his basin.

"Yes," answered Benyam, with some pride, "she died beautiful! She didn't take much account o' we that last week, but she just went on

* *Dame Quickly*—"I bought yer a dozen of shirts to your back." *Falstaff*—"Dowlas, filthy dowlas, hostess."

as loud as ever she could wi' textes : 'Evil communication corrupts,' and such like good words, one after t'other, as fast as may be, and when she'd a done, she'd just begin all over again ! 'Twere a fine end," he added, complacently, "but 'twere very worryt, her a hollering and squealin' a night like that, so as us couldn't scarce get our nateral rest."

" Well," said old Simon, "she were a woman as worked hard a' her days, and now she may just take her rest 'where the wicked . . .'" (Simon, like Mrs. Benyam, was of opinion that one word out of the Bible was just as good as any other, as is the case with some other and wiser folk). " But I mun be goin'. Do ye know if the squire's at home at Thornley ? I heerd they was wonderful plagued with rats, and I thought as I might just pass and see."

" They ain't there," said the boy, who had followed the old man in, and was looking with a longing eye at the ferrets. " I see'd him a Toosday drivin' away. He were a standin' up of his 'ind legs i' the carriage a talkin' to Sam, what was a drivin' of him for to meet the coach like down at the ford."

" What do ye know about it, for to be putting in your word like that ?" grumbled his grandfather, turning upon him with a sharp aside.

" I heerd as that off mare of the squire's were to be sould, she's so very shuff, but she's a very neat nag for a' that, for any one as can do her justice," observed old Simon, who had a sharp eye for all beasts.

" Ye wouldn't let me see a tiddy bit o' one of their faces, would ye, Simon ?" said the irrepressible Rupert, anxiously, braving even his grandfather, in the ardour of his interest in the ferrets.

" Well, I can't stop, not by rights," answered the old man—taking, however, one of the lithe white things, with its vicious pink eyes, out of the bag, which climbed up and down and all over him, in and out, as if it had no bones, to the boy's unspeakable delight. " 'Tis wonderful cold to be sure," Simon went on, stroking her fondly, "so as there's scarce any young rabbits, nor nothing for her to eat, poor thing. The seasons ain't a mossel what they used to was. I mind that big storm as the Mississ were lost in, how the men built 'um housen in the snow just for pastime, as they got no work for weeks. Now 'tis May instead of December as is the sharp time."

" Eh, they was a deal better times, they was, then nor now. Wages is got that wonderful high as 'tis very inconvenient," said Benyam. " A penny a day I mind I used to get when I were a little lad as high as my staff, and kep' at it too. My wage growed like as I growed, but 'twere but eightpence and tenpence for full-growed men, you'll mind that. Now they thinks precious little o' fifteenpence as I pays 'um, and when there's work more nor'ary they wants an uncommon deal," added he, sighing.

" Well, you and I se a getting into years : I suppose it'll last our time," moralized the old ratcatcher. " That's what I allays said when there were all that noise as the French was a coming. 'Twon't be not no detriment to us old uns, I says."

"I never was afeard o' the matter o' them," replied Benyam, somewhat consequentially ; "they couldn't ha' got as far as we anyhow. How ever could they ha' crossed the bruck, I'd like to know ? I've a seen they red-coats turned there scores and scores o' times. Why, 'tis fifteen feet and more across, and the bank's so steep. Nay, they'd never ha' got over there by no manner o' means. I've a stood looking at it from the planks (the bridge), and it were as plain as the blind could see it."

"Well, us lives t'other side on it, so that don't so much odds to we ; us must just chance it," said Simon, resignedly. "But I must be a going," said he, cramming the ferret back into the bag, to Rupert's infinite regret. "I wish ye all and each good mornin', and thank ye kindly.

CHAPTER III.

A PAIR OF FRIENDS.

YEARS went on, the child grew into a lad—a very handsome, dark, black-haired boy, but with the sullen expression certain to come out of that unloved life without a caress. He grew old enough to be of use in the farm, and did more and more of the work both in and out of the house ; but from neither his grandfather nor his mother came anything but the coldest and hardest of words.

One beautiful summer's day, the hay was just waiting to be cut, and the whole country smelt like a nosegay, when the boy took his food out of his stern mother's hands : the half-boiled dumpling, the lump of bread and cheese, which is the ordinary fare of our most unculinary of nations. The soft air was full of sweet scents and pleasant sounds, the hedges were a tangle of wild-roses and honeysuckle, as he went and lay down with his dinner in his hand on the edge of the hill before the wide opening view. The world as it seemed to him was all to be seen in that far-stretching plain : the broad hedgerows dotted with great elms, the sweeps of wood, the waving corn just beginning to change colour, the west wind tracing its motion over it with swift soft undulating waves, the hay-fields, the swathes falling fast before the scythe, each beyond each, forming little more than a line thus seen from the hill above, with varying shades of golden green softening into exquisite lilac and blue ; till in the far distance (they said it was five-and-thirty miles) the palest possible line of low hills, each with its story of the ancient fights, melted with the haze into the sky.

Rupert did not concern himself with all this beauty, but once at church (where he did not often trouble himself, however, to go) he had heard about the Devil showing the kingdoms of the earth, and though he did not understand, he had a sort of feeling that they must all lie in that blue plain, where he longed to go. He lay in the sunshine, but his little heart was sore and lonely. Mr. Max Müller says that ideas cannot exist without words ; and the ideas of a —shire peasant

in an outlying hamlet in those days must have been few indeed, if his vocabulary was their limit. But though ideas may not exist, feelings and emotions can; and the vague longings after affection and sympathy of his little heart were as painful as if he could have expressed them in the best print,—perhaps more so, print lets off a great deal of steam.

A cold nose was thrust at the moment up to his cheek, and Quick, the daughter of Quick, as sensible and affectionate as her mother, was making great demonstration with her tail as she crept fondly and closely up to the boy. Benyam was rather jealous indeed of their intimacy, and always sent the dog about her business when he found her with Rupert.

"Quick, dear old Quick," said the boy, hugging her tenderly; and the meaning of the hug was, "You love me, Quick; nobody loves me but you: we love each other, don't we, Quick?" and Quick responded with much eloquence, though she too had no words for her ideas. And the boy's heart, after half an hour's unvoiced conversation, was much comforted, though the old man's stern whistle summoned the dog before they had half done what they had to say, and Quick, whose conscience was a much more active one than most human beings', went off like an arrow.

A few days after, with the assistance of his dog, Benyam took down some sheep to the butcher's, at the village of Sainton; and on the way home, as he walked along the hot dusty bit of road with a rival farmer who lived a mile or two further in the plain, they discussed the price with much heat; and when this topic was ended it was succeeded by an interminable quarrel over an invaluable remedy for the "foot-rot," which Benyam wanted to get at, and John Bathe to keep for himself. "Tis worth all the money in the King's bank it is," said he, "and I won't give it to nobody, not if it were ever so."

But Farmer Bathe "had had rather more than was good for him, and was talksey; for when a man's wet like, he'll open out like a hedgehog," as old Benyam observed complacently afterwards; and accordingly before they reached the "Gipsy's grave" he had got hold of the receipt. The pursuit, however, had been so keen that he paid no attention to Quick, who he took for granted was following at his heels. It was above half way home and excessively hot when he missed her, the old man was tired and wanted to get back, so he sent Rupert, whom he found "shepherding" in a lower field, back after the dog. The boy wandered up and down for some time without being able to see or hear anything of her, till at length he heard a tremendous noise near the horse-pond in the wide, ruinous, scattered collection of houses called the Market-place, and hurried there. A crowd of men and boys were throwing stones at a wretched half-drowned beast: a horrible doubt ran like a knife into the boy's heart; he rushed to the place—the miserable head that appeared could not be recognized, but he felt sure that it was Quick. "Ye'r' wicked chaps," he screamed, "a killing our dog!"

"He's mad, he hit Jem!" cried the dancing little ruffians, enjoying the sport all the more for his rage.

"Then it's you as have drove her mad," ground Rupert through his teeth. "You did a ought to be drownded too!" And he pommelled his way through the crowd and straight into the water. A hoarse laugh was the only salute as the wretched beast, with a whine of recognition and an attempt to reach her master's outstretched hand, sank under a final stone. Wild with rage, Rupert showered blows right and left from his clenched fists, pushed one boy into the pond, knocked down another, and set off at a gallop home. It might have gone hard with him, however, for the men and boys were very angry; but the old ratcatcher passing by called out:—

"You'd best take care! Benyam will be down upon ye like the Devil and all his works for killin' of his dog." They paused for a moment and he got off unmolested.

His heart was half broken, and he sat down under a hedge as soon as he reached a quiet spot, and sobbed desperately—those dry hard sobs without a tear, which harden instead of softening one's heart—to lose the only thing that loved him, and in such a way! Then he rose up a harder and a worse boy, with revenge and wrong in his heart; the powers of good and evil, the black and white horses of the old myth, were making a struggle for his soul, and the black horse was winning.

The boy's face was the index to what was going on within. Nature had done well for him: had given him a large square forehead, a clear eye, and a firm good mouth—the power of thought in the upper part of the face, and of will in the lower; but now there was a sullen look in the brow, and a dogged expression about the chin.

CHAPTER IV.

A HUNTING MORNING.

It was a great hunting county, and to watch the horses and dogs across country was one of Rupert's chief pleasures. To rush after the hounds in full chase, and judge where there was the greatest chance of their path being cut across again, was as keen a delight to him as to the best mounted man in the field. Hunting is a really popular amusement, and nearly as much enjoyed by foot as by horsemen.

It was a beautiful day, the first burst of spring after a long frost, the pale blue sky dappled with little flecks of cloud, a bright sun and a soft wind, when Rupert reached, breathless, one of those double gates in a high unclipped hedge, which seem invented to give most trouble to man and beast, and to be of no use to either. Half the red-coats, and the dogs, had swept past him across the poachy field full of rushes,—“splash gate” leading into “swim meadow,” notorious both,—when an impatient sportsman came up: a tall dark man, riding a very fine black horse; everything about him looked as first-rate as his horse, but he seemed out of humour and angry; he had taken a wrong cut, and was far behind the rest of the field.

"Open those gates, boy!" he called out imperiously. Rupert did as he was bid; but as he pushed back the second, the impatient horse in the narrow space between the two, lashed out with his hind legs, and in his haste, Rupert, in avoiding the kick, let fall the gate. It touched neither horse nor man, who was far too good a rider to be caught; but he swore a fierce oath at the lad, and turned out of his way to strike at him with his heavy-handled whip before he rode on. The boy had done his best, and almost hissed with rage and a burning sense of injustice. In a few minutes, however, he followed till all were out of sight; and he was turning slowly home, when the fox suddenly entered a great wood from which they had been keeping him carefully all the morning, and doubled back almost to the place whence he had started.

The cheery sound, which is music in the ears of gentle and simple sportsmen, was heard echoing up and down the heart of the wood, though the horsemen could not be seen as they galloped along the ridings.

Rupert had a good eye for sport, and he took up his station in a capital position, where the "spinney" ended in a steep bank on the field; the brushwood was so thick that it was hard for anything bigger than a fox to make a way on either side, but in the middle was an old clearing where a number of trees had been dragged out: the bank, however, had been made up again, and a new and solid oak post and rail fixed at the top. Rupert ensconced himself very comfortably under a neighbouring hedge, and was rewarded by the fox jumping almost into his arms, followed by the whole pack at full cry and full speed, tails in the air, black, brown, and white; it was very delightful, and not a horseman in sight to share the honour of his position, though he could hear their cries all round.

A moment after his old enemy on the black horse came hard and fast through the wood, and up to the new set fence. It was a tremendous leap, the rail was high, the bank was deep, for the ground fell very much into the field below, and there was a wide ditch full of water and leaves. Moreover, there was no good landing-place on the other side, which sloped up again, and was poachy and slippery with the stiff soil, and greasy with a thaw after a hard frost. He drew up and looked at it; it was a great temptation to go over; the hounds were running into the fox just ahead, the rest of the field far behind, and he would have had to go back a quarter of a mile at least to find gate or gap in the thick wood. At that moment the boy, seeing him hesitate, clapped his hands.

"I'm on the right side of the hedge now, and where you'd fain be," cried he.

The jeering of a boy was not likely to affect a crack rider of the —shire hounds; but perhaps it added the half-grain necessary to the strong inclination which made him resolve to go over, and he spurred his horse at the fence: the brute was wiser than his master and refused it; and again and again the rider brought him back to the leap with whip and spur. Both by this time were furiously out of temper, and at last, in a sort of cross-grained manner, the horse went over. The boy saw them in

the air for the hundredth part of a second, the very incarnation of health, and strength, and power—the next moment there lay only a huddled mass of legs and arms on the ground : the horse was down, and the rider had fallen on the wrong side, his leg crushed under the saddle, and he himself at the mercy of the hoofs. The horse scrambled up, lashing out behind him as was his wont, and hitting his master violently on the head. In another moment he was out of sight.

Awed and frightened by the silence, Rupert crept up : the rider lay motionless, and he attempted to raise the head ; the blood streamed from the mouth, and he laid it down again and ran hurriedly to look for help. The red-coats were riding rapidly on in the next field, too eager to attend to the gesticulating boy, till at last one of them, who caught sight of the riderless black horse over the hedge, found time and interest enough to listen to what he was saying.

“ What, had a spill ? What is it you’re saying ? not dead ? impossible ! ” and he followed the lad to the spot.

“ Poor fellow !—what, Ayscough, can’t you speak, man ? ” said the young squire, dismounting and going up to the prostrate form, and trying his best to alter the position of the body and to feel the pulse.

He had passed his arm through his horse’s bridle, who, excited by the sounding halloes, and eager to press on, reared and struggled so that his master could hardly keep him from trampling on the fallen sportsman.

“ Quiet, chestnut ! still, you brute ! ” repeated he vainly. “ Is there nobody within reach but you, boy ? ” said he in despair. “ Can you hold the horse and fetch some one else to help carry him to the nearest house on a hurdle ? ”

“ Rowan and Toby’s at work in the low moor,” said Rupert, going off rather sullenly.

The help was long in coming. Charles Blount wetted his handkerchief in the ditch and sat trying to keep the head cool. Hounds and hunters had swept far away, and the stillness was awful to him, alone with that senseless body : there was not a creature within sight or hearing ; nothing stirred but the twittering birds, and an occasional drop falling from the twigs. He had a man’s horror of sickness or death where he could not help, while he was perfectly fearless himself. And as he knelt there doing his poor little best he looked round with dismay ; he felt utterly hopeless and wretched, and his blood ran cold as he looked at what had lately been his imperious cousin lying silent and motionless, the face perfectly white and streaks of blood across the light part of his clothes.

At length Rupert returned : they hoisted the unconscious burden on the shoulders of the men. “ Where’s the nearest house ? ” Charles inquired. Rupert pointed to his grandfather’s on the hill, and the melancholy little procession began to move up, preceded by the boy, who had now given up the horse to its master. “ You haven’t ridden him ? ” said the young squire, a little anxiously even at that moment. “ Did he go pretty steadily ? I’m of no use here,” he added, in a few minutes. “ I’ll

ride off for the doctor. I saw Brown in the field not half an hour back." And he mounted his horse and vanished.

The hurdle and its accompaniments went on alone. Rupert threw open the house-door and led the way into the empty parlour; it was a low stone-floored room, the windows of which were never opened, with scarcely any furniture in it: they laid the hurdle on a great table in the midst, spit in their hands, and, all in the way of business, proceeded to lift its occupant on to the great wide, hard sofa of ceremony on which no one had ever rested.

By this time the old man had heard the commotion, and came in much annoyed.

"What are ye doing, I should like to know, in other men's doors?" he said, sourly. "It's one of they random rackety hunters, is it?"

He was too stolid and stodgy to be surprised or distressed at anything so little personal to himself as the sight of a man insensible from a fall out hunting.

"Ye wouldn't have us leave a dying man upo' the ground, I take it," said one of the men. "His nag have a hot him in the 'ead; they was both down together. 'Tis an unked death, to be sure."

"And who's to be at his charges?" growled Benyam, going up and looking at the just breathing body.

"He's a friend of Sir John Blount's. You knows he?" answered one of the men consolingly, as he stood with his head on one side contemplating the occupant of the sofa like a work of art.

"Well, at all sights *you* needn't be cumbering here," was the savage reply. "Cecily, come here!" he called. "Where's his horse got to? I'd just like to find out? Ye might just hop over and catch that, as ye want summut to do. We can mind the man. Cecily, I say, why don't ye come?"

"I'll wait till the young squire gets back again anyhow," answered one man doggedly. "Rowan, ye may go after the nag."

"Then wait outside, will ye?" said Benyam, turning them out.

"The old master's right down franz," said the men as they left the room. The unused parlour, however, was so cold that they were far better off outside.

Meantime Rupert had rushed into the dairy after his mother, with his eager, confused description of what had happened. "And the fox turned up by the Great Sea wood into the spinney, and he fell, and the nag topside o' him, and hot him i' the head as he lay."

"What, one of them red-coats?" said she quietly, finishing her pat of butter. "'Tis an okkard chance for we, sure; and I've plenty for to bang about, wi'out sick men."

"Make haste," said the boy impatiently, shaking her by the gown, as she deliberately examined the kitchen cupboard for brandy and vinegar, and lingered over the fire.

"I am making haste," answered she, in a vexed tone. "Don't ye see he's sure to want hot water, and I mun fill the kettle?"

"Why, the man will be dead afore ye get nigh to him!" said he, angrily. "He've a cotched it in his 'ead, I tell ye."

By the time she reached the parlour her father had got rid of the two labourers, and had followed them out. There was no one there but the dying man as she came in with Rupert after her.

She crossed the room with the usual listless calm manner that she did everything, till she suddenly caught sight of the face on the sofa. She paused for a moment, then threw her arms over her head, and with a deep sobbing groan cast herself down upon the body.

"Oh, Rupert, speak to me, speak to me!" she moaned. In a few minutes, however, she had raised herself quickly, and was trying all sorts of remedies to bring back animation. She lifted his head up on her knees, and as each fresh trial failed, the deep sobs shook her as she cried, "Cannot ye speak one word, Rupert; can't ye sinnify as ye knows me?"

But there was neither look nor sound in answer.

When the restraints of a stern nature give way, the opening of the flood-gates is far more fearful than in softer dispositions. The boy stood by in silent wonder at her passion of grief; he obeyed all her orders, brought her in water and vinegar and brandy as she asked for them; and when everything seemed in vain, and she lay silently beside the body, he stole out of the room with the sort of feeling that he was present at a scene which he ought not to witness.

It seemed a long time before the doctor arrived at the house; but he came in at last, followed by young Blount. As none of the remedies which he applied seemed to have the slightest effect, he shook his head. "It'll all be over in a few minutes," said he; "there's hardly any pulse left."

Cecily was standing coldly and calmly by them. Every sign of emotion had vanished when she heard the strangers enter the house.

"Poor Ayscough," said Blount, coming near; "poor Rupert!"

The boy, who had followed them in, looked wonderingly round, but again the name was not addressed to him.

In a few minutes the faint signs of life had ceased, all was still, and the lad bent over the body in wondering fear. The likeness between them was curious. Cecily walked away to the window, and stood bending over a row of those strange, prickly, distorted, half-alive plants which one sees only in farmhouse windows, typical of her own death-in-life existence. The doctor looked curiously after her, but her back was turned, and not a muscle moved.

"What a blow for his poor father and mother!" said Charles, more occupied with the dead than the living. "I wonder what they'd like done with him? It's so far to Searsfield. At all events, we will see that you have no more trouble about it than can be helped," added he to old Benyam, who had now come in.

"I've a put up the black horse; and a very fine beast 'tis," said he,

in a very different tone to what he had used to the men. "Where's the nag to be sent?" he inquired first; and secondly, "What shall ye please as we should do with the gentleman?"

"My father will send from Hartley Grange, I am sure, as soon as I can get home, for 'it,'" said Charles, with a little natural hesitation at the painful word, "and the horse too; and we're much obliged to you for all that you have done," he added, turning courteously to Cecily; but she said nothing.

They left the room, mounted their horses, and rode slowly away together.

"Did you ever see such a likeness?" said the young doctor eagerly.

"Was it?" answered Charles, laconically. "It may only have been accidental. At all events, it's no business of ours. Poor fellow! Poor Ayscough!" he repeated. "He was a sort of cousin of ours; and that beautiful property at Scarsfield, down in the north, was to come to him," he added, with a landowner's respect for the rights of succession.

"Was he an only child?" said the surgeon.

"No; but he was the eldest; and the estate has gone from Rupert to Rupert for I don't know how many generations," answered Charles, with an eldest son's contempt for cadets. "I warned him against Black Bess this morning," he went on. "She'd such a devil of a temper; she was always a savage brute; but he would ride her—she was such a one to go. He'd a will of his own at all times had poor Rupert."

"I never saw him here till this season," said the surgeon again.

"No, this was the first time he's hunted this country. He'd just sold out, and talked of settling at home. Poor fellow!"

And Charles rode slowly home to give orders about bringing away the body of his cousin to Hartley Grange, whence he had issued that morning in the highest health and spirits, the boldest rider and the best-mounted man in the field.

The boy had followed them, to bring out their horses from the shed where they had been put up. When he returned into the room where the body lay, his mother had disappeared. That evening "it" was fetched away by Sir John Blount's people.

The MS. Journal of Captain E. Thompson, R.N.
1783 TO 1785.

WE have before us a literary curiosity, not, indeed, of great antiquity, but having almost every other attraction to recommend it. It is a manuscript journal kept by a captain in the Royal Navy, from April 1, 1783, to March 25, 1785, and including, together with a world of home politics, literary and general gossip, a run to the coast of Africa in command of the *Grampus*, 50-gun frigate, and a considerable stay on the island of Madeira. The writer was a Captain Edward Thompson, who, when the journal opens, appears to have lived in Bedford Square, but who also resided occasionally a good deal at Mortlake, besides professional visits to Portsmouth, Plymouth, &c., and occasional excursions to friends, chiefly in the neighbourhood of London. The book was found at a cottage in Cheltenham; and another MS. book, the diary of a fashionable physician in Cheltenham in the earlier years of this century was found with it; but no connection between the books, as far as we are aware, has yet been discovered. Two thin quarto volumes, about the size of boys' copy books, formed part of the same collection. One contains copies of various letters addressed by Captain Thompson to Lords of the Admiralty, Ministers of State, and other official personages; the other is an account of the sheds and storehouses in Portsmouth dockyard and arsenal, but bears date 1828, many years after Captain Thompson's death, and must have belonged to some other person, perhaps a member of his family, who may have chosen the navy for a profession. They appear to have turned up by mere accident, having been brought to a medical gentleman of the town by a patient from the cottage. The versatility of the gifts of gossip which Captain Thompson displays is a key to the large circle of acquaintance in which he mixed. In proof of this we may say that this little book, a small octavo in brown sheepskin, of sixty-three leaves, contains anecdotes of persons of all ranks and classes, from the King and Queen down to street beggars and shoe-blacks' daughters. It is written in a clear small round hand, the ink a little faded, but almost every word legible with very little trouble. The spelling follows a standard of its own, but is consistent. We have always "pritty," "gardiner," "herbarum" for "herbarium" (twice); and Mr. Pitt's name, which frequently occurs, has almost always but one *t*, while Sheridan has always two *r*'s. In the copies of letters, however, the spelling is correct; showing that the writer was aware of a recognized standard, but in these familiar entries was careless of it. The Captain was more or less intimate with Dr. Johnson, Mr. Wilkes, Tom

Davies the actor—Johnson's friend and pet (see Bosworth *passim*), who “mouthed a sentence as curs mouth a bone”—Sir Francis Sykes, Colman, George Jackson, Lacy of Drury Lane, Dr. Walcot, and Sir George Young; was employed by Lord Keppel, First Lord in the Fox and North coalition; was consulted by, and occasionally dined with, Lord Howe; had interviews with Mr. Fox, Sir C. Jenkinson, Lords Hotham, Sydney, and Carmarthen, regarding various points of geographical and naval interest in our African and Indian dependencies, and appears to have been treated with various degrees of respect and confidence by all. The journal terminates abruptly at March 25, 1785, when the writer appears to have been again under sailing orders for Africa. We learn, on making application at the Admiralty, that he died in the following year, and that his seniority as captain dates from April 7, 1772.

It is not easy to make out clearly any facts of importance concerning the gallant writer's family. He briefly records in one entry, charged with feelings of domestic sorrow, the madness of his wife (Nov. 16, 1784), but there is no other allusion to her. He appears to have had a sister whose married name was Wright, a fragment of one of whose letters, with the date, December, 1784, is wafered into the fly-leaf of the book. Under November 13, 1784, an entry occurs “on the death of Mr. Pryme, my brother-in-law.” Under March 15, 1785, occurs the following:—“I saw my poor sister, miserable, melancholy, and lame. I endeavoured, poor sorrowful soul, to alleviate her distresses and pains.” From another entry we learn that she lived “beyond Islington.” This is, perhaps, the same “sister Wright” whose letter is preserved, dated December, 1784. It is full of gratitude for his kindness. Under October 13, 1784, occurs some lines “to my Mother,” from which it is likely she was then dead. An entry, March 17, 1785, on the “learned pig,” says:—

He now draws the attention of the beau monde—women of the first Fashion waited four hours for their turn to see him. I am much flattered in this classick pig—he was bred at Beverly, in Yorkshire—a fellow student with the Thompsons and Hothams.

Another entry shows that those families had intercourse with each other. Under date of February 27, occurs, “I visited Colonel Hotham, Lord Keppel, Sir Charles Thompson, and Sir Francis Sykes.” The next day we find—

Sir Charles Thompson called upon me: for many years I have scarce received a civility from the miserable Hothams. The Commodore was to have married a cousin of mine, now Mrs. Twisleton Thompson. She refused him, and a shyness succeeded. However, I taking Colonel Hotham's son to sea with me draws the attention of these people to me.

Several entries, of which more anon, speak of a certain “Emma,” in whose society the Captain found solace. His connection with her was evidently of a kind which the opinion of that day hardly regarded as criminal, and which its practice, as appears from a large number of anecdotes, too often sanctioned. Probably, with his wife lost to him, as

appears, by lunacy, it would have been regarded by all his friends, if we except Dr. Johnson, as perfectly venial. In one ramble during his stay on the island of Madeira (March 8) we find it noted—"my nephew Thompson was with me." Possibly this nephew may have been the person to whom pertained the book of the Portsmouth plans, &c., mentioned above, and we think it not improbable he may be identical with a certain Mr. Pearson Thompson, well known at Cheltenham a generation ago, to whom the building over the Lansdowne quarter in that town, where he had an estate, is generally ascribed. Captain Thompson appears also to have had a son. We read, November 10, 1784, "My poor boy was so ill I began to be alarmed for his life." Also elsewhere, "To Slough in Bucks to search for a rural lodge . . . Maria, Tom, and Popham with me. The joys of life are confined to a few we love;" in which he seems to be speaking of his children.

Captain Thompson was certainly a man of some property, but had not always been so. One of the earliest entries is, "When I was poor, I dressed gay; now I am rich, I dress plain. In the first instance I courted attention—in the second, I command it." There is a semi-Johnsonian ring about this antithesis which shows what model our Captain studied. We may add, that a good deal of stilted reflection occurs in the book, which proves that he did not distinguish the faults from the virtues of the style which he copied. Shortly after this last we read, "I went from town to buy an estate at Hoddeson, a pritty leasehold—declined the purchase, and slept at Hertford." Nearly two years later occurs the entry already given about going to Slough in Bucks. Under July 19, 1783, we find,—

I had frequent conversations with the Lord Keppel to give up to him and the Duke of Portland my interest in the borough of Keydon to Mr. R. Thompson, the brother of Bielby, on condition they gave me their interest on my return from Guinea. Bielby Thompson was, we believe, the name of the first Lord Wenlock. The writer, however, does not speak of this gentleman and his brother as though they were his own relations; the tone of the entry suggests that they were no more to him than the Duke of Portland—mere politicians who might be useful. The same remark applies to the Sir C. Thompson mentioned here, who at some time commanded a regiment. His anxiety to discount "the borough of Keydon" before he went to sea will find a ready sympathy in many patriotic bosoms on either side of the present House. This borough, within a few miles of Hull, was placed in schedule A of the Reform Bill of 1832, and appears to have been always a marketable commodity up to that time.

Many of the entries show that Captain Thompson was a strong Tory at the core. He brands Mr. Fox, December 20, 1783, as "the modern Catiline," a term familiar to the readers of the *Anti-Jacobin*, adding, "the days of Charles I. are reflected strongly in the times." Again, on the occasion of a riot among the sailors—who, thronging in from the outports, visited the Admiralty and St. James's demanding prize-money, and insulting all

officers—he adds, April 19, 1783, “ May not all these disturbances be attributed to Mr. Fox, who destroyed the systems and power of Government, and gave the dissipated the means of being factious ? ” Again, January 12, 1774, we read, “ Fellows of Gamblers like Fox and Sheridan dare presume to rule a virtuous nation.” A very early entry describes Fox’s canvass for Westminster as having “ no applause or success.” The writer adds :—“ I had a meaning to offer”—*i.e.*, an intention to stand—“ for Westminster.” Some malcontents appear to have found out this “ meaning.” We read the next day, April 6, 1773 :—“ Mr. Wilkes proposed to me to stand for Westminster in opposition to Mr. Fox; he (Wilkes) had the interest of Lord Grosvenour and many others.” Thompson did stand, was proposed by Lord Mahon, but found no seconder. On the 8th he says :—“ The electors of Westminster were so chagrined at this disappointment in losing an election by their own neglect that they waited on me to endeavour to make it void and false return.” By the 13th he had “ relinquished every idea of a petition to Parliament on the Westminster election ;” adding, “ I find men very ready and forward to *roast chestnuts with my fingers!* ” Under March 5, 1785, we read :—“ Charles Fox was declared duly elected for Wt. minster ; every blackguard gave testimony to the event ;” and March 7 :—“ Mr. Fox was drawn by the mob in his chariot from St. James’ Street to Covent Garden to be chaired—I never saw a man look so black with fear.” Under January 26, 1785 :—“ The Parliament opened, where Mr. Pitt stood a Colossus, unshook by the breeze of Clamor or of Envy.” These extracts show pretty plainly the Captain’s bias. We find the writer, after his return from Guinea, thinking of standing for Camelford, but no steps towards the object are recorded as taken. Again, under February 8 :—“ I received a message by Sir Geo. Young from some members of Mr. Pit’s interest, to know whether I would wish to come into Parliament.”

Notwithstanding Thompson’s Tory predilections, Lord Keppel, for a time Fox’s First Lord, was his official friend and patron. He no doubt regarded himself as professionally neutral in politics, and was ready to supply either party with information about the African coast, Negapatam, Guinea, for which he had an especial affection, and the Andaman Islands. It was proposed by Thompson to Lord Keppel—

To explore the coast of Africa between 20° and 30° S. L., where there was a fertile country, defended north from the Portuguese, and south from the Dutch, by high, barren, and inaccessible mountains. . . . This settlement I proposed for our Indians to call at and refit, and so come up with S.E. trade (wind), in war to avoid the enemy without returning the beaten road from the Cape, and the necessity of putting into Rio de Janario.

The account of his voyage is, on the whole, amusing. It gives a pleasing picture of society in the island of Madeira in the last century, with a romantic story of a young lady whose true love was crossed by the bars of a convent. This portion of the diary concludes, March 11, 1784, with a notice that it “ is continued in another book under the head of anecdotes

and remarks, and the partial descriptions of the forts and towns in Africa are inserted in the ship's journals." It is resumed on shore under the date of September 25, 1784, the first entry being, "I dined with Wilkes." Application has been made to the gentlemen who have charge of the Admiralty records, in the hope that their research might throw additional light on the writer and his doings; save, however, the date of his seniority and death, and the fact that he died in command of the *Grampus*, on the African station, no further information appears to be within their reach.

The great feature of the journal, however, consists in the profusion of verses with which it abounds. These are occasionally good, but mostly hover just below mediocrity, or barely soar up to it. Our captain seems to have always had one hand on the lyre, even if he were guiding the helm with the other. Not unfrequently his epigrams, epitaphs, and jermiads are variously fashioned and refashioned. He will not let a thought stand, as it were, on its own legs, but tries on one pair of stilts after another, and produces at last something at once pompous and lame. Then there are heaps of anecdotes from the dramatic, literary, fashionable, and scandalous gossip of the day; some of them old stories, some of them new, some of them different versions of facts known in the main from other sources. Nothing, according to the fashion of the age, was too coarse or too filthy to be set down in black and white. There are no dashes, asterisks, or inuendos, but a "spade" is called by its own name. We know precisely what sort of jokes and stories were currently relished and retailed on the quarter-deck, in the First Lord's dining-room, at the "Beef-steak Club," or in the lobbies of Covent Garden. Here are repartees picked up from beggars, and smacking strongly of the kennel; a fragment of a satire of the writer's own, called "A Caricatura Painting of London;" an epitaph on a favourite monkey; stories of the last fine lady who had run off with her footman; of the first steps of George, Prince of Wales, in systematic debauchery; Dryden's lines on the "three poets" distorted to a parody in praise of Dr. Johnson; open-mouthed anxieties about balloons—then a rage with which the public was newly inoculated; with notices of the weather, and homilies on the depravity, ingratitude, selfishness, and hypocrisy of the age; memoranda of interviews with Pitt or Fox, or their Secretaries of State; a code of signals communicated to Lord Howe; endless entanglements of Sheridan with his lessees, partners, agents, dupes, and Jews; a modest proposal that he (the Captain) should rearrange *Hamlet*, killing the king in the third act; and every here and there a skull with cross-bones sketched in the page—invariably a sign that some bad verses are not far off, commemorative of the obituary of friend or statesman—all these and a great deal more make up the *farrago libelli*. The Captain's literary potterings often crop up, queerly mixed with professional memoranda. Under April 21, 1778, we read: "I addressed Lord Keppel for the *Europa*; finished the poem of the Skull." Similarly, under March 10, 1784, we read: "The weather being in general tem-

pestuous I resolved to embarque, and in the evening commenced the poem of Bello Monte." Again, somewhere between Portugal and Madeira, the "Rock of Sintra" having been sighted a couple of days before, we find the following :—

Feb. 18.—Muggy, drizzling, foul weather. At noon passed the promontory of St. Vincent's at about twenty leagues distance. Winds which have blown at a great distance produce a great swell.

And swells have roll'd where winds have never blown.

Again—

Feb. 19.—I began to copy the poem of Woman, written fourteen years ago, and corrected by most of my friends—but such cold corrections as do no good.

24.—I rose before the sun, to contemplate his power and majesty—his beatanies, genial joys, and dignity—his Colours and resplendent Glories on the left, to the west, was a sky diversified in the manner, and in all the gaudy colours of the Indian gingham. . . . I sent for Wilson, my painter, but he was so struck at the gorgeous beauty and dignity of the scene, that he gave up every attempt to imitate it. He is a Londoner, and what made the scene more glorious and more surprising to him—I believe he had never seen the sun rise before.

After noting the capture of a "fine-feathered quail, and very fat," he proceeds to remark that—

Milton never describes the rising but the setting glory, and in that he is more short than I could have wished him.

"The sun now fallen
Beneath th' Azores, whither the prime orb," &c. &c.

This, though the nearest, is very unlike the gorgeous display. In the following lines I have but ill succeeded in the attempt to describe it.

THE RISING SUN.

in the Latitude (*sic*) of 33° 0' N.

As silver Day above th' horizon grew
Faint wore the lustre of the morning star
To give the MORN triumphal Entry.

The splendid simile of the "Indian gingham" does not appear to have been turned to the account which it deserved. The reader will appreciate the comic contrast of taking the latitude, and then seizing the opportunity to soar on Miltonic pinions. Was ever quarter-deck so splashed with Helicon before? How long is it since the Royal Navy has known a captain who kept a "painter," but was his own poet? He appears not to have known, or to have forgotten, *L'Allegro*, where the fine tints describing sunrise occur :—

"Right against the eastern gate,
Where the great Sun begins his state."

The journal of Captain T. never allows one to detect by any overt sign a Sunday from among the other days of the week, and he does not appear to have done the clergy the honour, as far as we can discover, to include a single member of their body among his large and miscellaneous list of visiting acquaintance. We find, however, under Feb. 10, 1785—"I took my salt fish with Geo. Colman;" this must have been Ash Wednesday.

On trying back the other days by this test we find here and there a certain strain of sedate reflection pervading the Captain, when not dining out with friends, in the Sunday jottings of his diary. Occasionally, as is, we rather think, common in journalizing, the memoranda of one day, not being punctually posted up, ran into another. But on the whole the following may be relied on as Sunday entries :—

Oct. 10, 11 (the 10th was Sunday).—Passed my time in study and contemplation—shutting out the noisy world. Peace and ease are the blessings of mortality.

Dec. 27.—The weather most severely and intensely cold. The objects of distress innumerable, and the vices and follies of the world insupportable.

Nov. 7.—I walked to Primrose Hill. I gave the Deity my thanks from that eminence for the being I bear. I could almost hate mankind, when I feel and see that all attentions and attachments are governed by Interest. No man now-a-days is courted or admired for his honour or his honesty ; all attentions are produced from that we can give, or from that we can do. But what gratitude or social love can we expect from each other, when no person can find a minute to thank God for his being and the blessings he has given ?

I took a walk round Kew and Richmond. The plan of the Gardens I found altered from the design of the late Capability *Brown*. . . . Men seek different modes of worship ; to avoid every title (title ?) of the Pharisee, I contrive to have my meditations in my walks. Mr. Fox met his friends at the Shakspeare—the company was tag-rag.

Such an entry as the following occurs here and there :—

Feb. 9, 1785. I walked from this wicked Sodom towards Hampstead ; I met no peripatetic of the same mind. I fear the wickedness of this city is verging so fast to ruin, that, like Sodom, a few good men will not be found to save it.

Oct. 3, 1784.—I met and conversed with an old woman of 85, bent double with age, running with rheum, and shaking with palsy ; she was poor and needy. I gave her a mite ; but I could not prevail her to relinquish this world and wish to change it ; she always said "she would wait till she was called."

April 15, 1783.—Visited two boys at Kingston School supported by me.

From May the 3rd to December the 20th, 1783, I had not the bustle and hurry of situation as in the former part of my life ; for I have always found that neither my writings in politicks or morals ever converted one sinner. I therefore left off all controversial writings.

These extracts show the Captain in his more serious moods. He seems to have been a man of warm affections, generous sympathies, and moral instincts, mostly sound, although with some exceptions, and not without some spice of religious feeling. The age was one of that disbelief in elevated goodness which is too often found where examples of it are practically rare. Such a moral standard as was supposed attainable was dissociated from religion ; and bare moral goodness was only swallowed by society *cum grano salis*, i.e., of vice. A man who should seek to set up Christian duty as his standard was written down a hypocrite. It was the current theory of life, that openness of heart and kindliness of nature were always found alloyed with looseness of practice in some point or other of morals, and that a conscientious profession of high principle was so seldom real that it might be neglected as a mere *rara avis in terris*, and the professor rated with almost a moral certainty as an impostor. It was, in

short, the view implied in the "Charles" and "Joseph Surface" of the most popular dramatist of the day. Rakish profligacy took large credit for its random good nature and open-handed dash, and any sort of strictness was debited with secret vice. Men had not the courage to believe in human nature at its best, or that the generous and the feeling could also be pure. Such exceptional cases as Dr. Johnson, or in the earlier part of the century, Colonel Gardiner, were uninfluential. Nay, they partly confirmed the view that every man will take his fling, for they in early life had each had theirs. Society drew the inference that a man who did not live by appetite—with intellect, of course, if he had it, but still by appetite on the whole—was a poor creature, cold of heart, and thin of blood, sinking below the animal which man at his normal condition is, not rising above it; and that, if he professed not to be such, he was a monstrously deep knave. The theory reigned, on the whole, from the Restoration to the Regency—from Congreve to Byron, and led men who were sensitive to opinion to abandon all religious profession, in order, as Captain Thompson has it, "to avoid every tittle of the Pharisee." That he was not untinged by the social depravity of the age is what we might expect, even if his own pages did not furnish the evidence which we are about to quote. But as far as we can judge, his indignation at the ignoble vices which flourished around him was genuine, and he would not himself have been guilty of a mean, false, or dastardly action. He was evidently a highly sociable man, and kept up acquaintance with many, as with John Wilkes and George Colman, for the sake of the wit and polish of their conversation and manners, whose private lives he sincerely detested. Speaking of the former, he quotes on one occasion the dictum of a friend—"Burnaby Green used to say I should always be with him to curb his blasphemy and—" Here follows then the worst that we know of our Captain, *habemus confitentem reum.*

Sept. 30, 1783.—My time has been spent here (Plymouth) with the faithful and affectionate Emma in a placid state of ease. I have devoted myself to my family, and recreated myself with them several times, shooting and fishing on the beautifull and romantick banks of the *Tavy*.

Jan. 4, 1784.—I embarked, and my dear Emma departed for London. We have now been inseparable 20 months, and in that time not a word ever pass'd of a crude or harsh nature; we always met with rapture and parted with regret.

Jan. 14.—I went to *Lip-hook* and met my dear Emma, whose company is alone the most pleasing amusement of my soul.

Feb. 5.—I went with my Emma to *Lipphook*, and parted; alas, parted! perhaps for ever.

The following, dated the 14th of the same month, is the second stanza of what the Captain calls,—

THE TAVY, A SONNET TO EMMA.

On thy stream delighted, straying
Trouts I've lured with treacherous art;
But with them while careless playing
Love and Emma caught my heart.

We hear no more of Emma till, on his return in the summer of 1784 from West Africa, the following occurs under date of October 7:—

Returned to Mortlake with the tender Emma, to avoid the importunities of the world, and shun its follies and madness. A nephew of Emma's was named by me Andrew Marvell; when he comes to reason the name may inspire him to be virtuous.

The following retrospect sums up the year 1784, dated December 31:—

Farewell old year; thou hast been to me diversified with pains and health, sweets and bitters, sea and land, home and foreign; but upon the whole, a more pleasing year than most. In February I left England, and visited the Maderia and Canary Isles—all Africa to St. Thomas, and returned in better health in July than I went out with. At Mortlake I passed the autumn with my favourite Emma, as much in Elysium as this world can approach it. The winter I have ended in town, as far as the termination of the year, but without ever visiting one publick exhibition.

This is the last entry relating to the person with whom Captain Thompson found solace for the loss, through lunacy, of his wife's society. Of the latter, save the three words, "my wife mad," the diary yields no trace. This too is probably in accordance with the manners of the age. The old régime as regards lunatics, even when not, as it too frequently was, barbarous and cruel, let them simply drop out of existence as objects not to be cared for beyond the fact of their safe custody. Accordingly, although there are several mentions of visits to a sister, apparently afflicted with some incurable malady, we find no entry of any visit paid to his wife.

Captain Thompson seems to have dabbled a good deal in literature. Besides the poem "On a Skull," and the poem of "Woman," before-mentioned, we find him on the evening of his embarkation from Madeira commencing the poem of "Bello Monte." This he appears to have completed, as we find under December 10, 1784:—"I gave Burnaby Green 'Bello Monte' for his opinion, and also Davies. I suppose the criticisms will be as long as from Berkshire to Reading." This Burnaby Green, as appears from another entry, was a scholarly person who had come into a large fortune, and then lost it all, save 300*l.* a year, in a brewing concern at Pimlico.

Here are a few lines from a design of a satire, called, "A Caricatura Painting of London."

Now, Lady City, take your formal chair,
While I my pallet and my brush prepare—

* * * *

Now Siddon's rant reverberates in our ears,
Now the Italian scrambles through the spheres,

* * * *

Pinetti fascinates the softer sex,
And Blanchard makes them try to break their necks;
We've chang'd for honour and domestick graces,
Men with false hearts and women with false faces.

Shortly before this, the writer sets down: "Began my sketches of characters;" and shortly afterwards, "wrote a scene of the follies of the day;" but there is no reason to think either more than a whim of the

moment, or that the writer had either power or resoluteness for a sustained effort much above the level of doggerel. He was liable to slight secretions of rhyme when roused and stirred by any unusual vagaries of the public taste, or when a return to London after the quiet shades of Mortlake made him feel the contrast of town manners an offensive glare. But although some other works, or projected works, of more pretension are alluded to, we take it the Captain was greatest at what his friend, Dr. Johnson, said Milton could not do, "chipping heads upon cherry-stones." We will string together a few of the better executed. The first is on a Mr. Russell, who bequeathed a hundred pounds for an epitaph: "I have given him," says our Captain, "the following one:”—

Why all this pomp, parade, and funeral bustle ?
It ne'er was wish'd by modest Master Russell.
He, when alive, was owned the man of men,
He forc'd applauses from the poet's pen ;
Honest and good he was as well as wise,
He fed the hungry, dried the widow's eyes ;
His charities require no poet's puff—
For one cool hundred you have lies enough.

The next is, "To the Memory of my Half-brother, Christopher Prysme, of Hull, Brasier."

Here lies Christopher Prysme the tinker,
A great spouter, and a free-thinker.

Again, on "Lord Kelly, who was a great Drinker,"

Within this vault lies our Lord Kelly,
Who made a cellar of his belly.

His habit seems to have been, on noticing the death of some public man or old comrade mentioned in some public print, to have felt the occasion, especially if the name admitted of an easy pun, at once a call upon his pen. Accordingly he occasionally perpetrates an "epitaph" on some one who he finds afterwards is still in the land of the living. Thus on Sir Thomas Pye, after half-a-dozen lines beginning, "Can this good Pye to death's deep oven go," he records, "I called upon him and found him in health, life, and spirits." The Captain's verses on the whole are twaddly. Like damp squibs, they sputter feebly and explode imperfectly; but he has always got another ready to let off. He evidently valued himself on his wit, and records accordingly jokes of his own with the effect which they had on the company. One such example is given below, in a string of naval anecdotes.

He appears to have contributed to the *Morning Post* occasional short pieces under the signature of N. None of these, however, are worth recalling. The book is valuable as showing many phases of life and manner which have passed away, and those culled from the observation of a man who had a wide range of acquaintance, and who jots down things just as they crossed his line of vision. We seem to stand at his point of view, and to partake of his experiences. It necessarily reproduces coarser

tints of profligacy and broader shadows of vice than we are accustomed to see falling across our daylight now, and lets us into things which we should never suspect to have existed from the respectably pedantic narrative of Boswell, or the polished epistles of Horace Walpole. Thus, in an epitaph on one Forest, the secretary of the "Beefsteak Club," not worth quoting, we have, in a foot-note appended, the following trait of club manners in those days, coming down apparently from the period of the "Boy Bishop" and the "Abbot of Misrule":—

The president of this club, in some burlesque, wears a mitre and chants a grace. When the members drink their punch, they have a method of alternately striking their glasses on the table.

A scandalous story was current, about the close of the year 1784, of a living lady of illustrious connections, but probably mad if the story had any foundation, having been found in the coffin which contained the body of her husband. We have about half-a-dozen versions of an "epitaph" or "epigram," which shall not be quoted, on this theme. The writer, however, remarks:—

Dec. 15.—I imagined a new humorous print of love in a coffin, and gave it to Humphreys for public notice.

On New Year's Day, 1785, he continues:—

The print of "Love in a Coffin" was published to-day. The family hath taken much pains to suppress everything on this subject. Lord Sackville took home his culprit truant daughter. I know no satire nor chastisement so severe against vice in people of fashion as prints, for which I designed the above on Mrs. Herbert.

The following is a reminiscence of a character from Ben Jonson's *Alchemist*, which has probably not revisited the stage since the writer's period:—

Had we seen Abel Drugger in real life, and as well and truly painted as by our best comedians, would he have excited our laughter? No. We only admire the character as play'd by Garrick, who, with all his wit, sense, and knowledge, could sink into so simple a lout.

Then there are anecdotes of Captain Cook and Petersgill (the *Voyages* of the former were then a recent publication), who both, as Mr. Jackson, a friend of the writer's, averred, "were footboys in his and father's families;" of Mrs. Bellamy, the actress, who "played Juliet thirty-two nights against Mrs. Cibber and Garrick," and who wrote her own memoirs. "Her general character," the writer remarks, "has been that of a Bacchant, for the Scotch said of her, 'they could not tell what sort of a character to fix upon her, for they always found her at prayers or drunk.'" We hear, too, of Admiral Sir Thos. Frankland, "very like Oliver Cromwell, of whom he was descended," who took some rich Spaniards (*i.e.*, Spanish ships), and was famed afterwards for his usury; "but the member for Thirsk would not attend Parliament on account of the putrid members that composed it, and I knew him," the writer adds, "to be equal to the worst of them." The opinion of Lord Mansfield, in conversation, is recorded that "Lord Geo. Gordon, of 'No-Popery' fame, was more wicked than

mad; and it was to be lamented he had not been hanged ten years ago." The following is curious, the more so as the authority at first sight appears good:—

Mr. Wilson waited upon me to relate a most extraordinary anecdote, and from the first personages of Buckingham House, for he was ever held in high estimation by them for his probity and ability as well as honour, and in the life of the D. York, he was his private secretary. A man of considerable importance is arrived from America with the copy of a letter and address from Gen. Washington, the majority of the army, and the 13 provinces. This paper early in the American War, when the French under the Marquis *De Fayet* was pushed for situation, was presented by this person to *Lord North* with positive instructions to wait but 48 hours for an answer. Three weeks elapsed and he was obliged to return without any, and then America threw herself into the arms of France. His M. says this paper was never given to him nor laid before Council. Mr. Pitt is in possession of it, and on it an impeachment is intended against *Lord North*.

The anonymousness of the "person of considerable importance" here mentioned, the silence concerning the contents of the "letter and address," and the fact that *Lord North* was not impeached, throw a cloud over the authenticity of this "most extraordinary anecdote" which no other facts, so far as we know, dispel. Further, if the Mr. Wilson in question was the same as Mr. Ben Wilson, to whom we shall have further occasion to refer, there will perhaps be found reason to distrust his unconfirmed authority. It may be granted as probable that some such paper was shown and talked about, but that on examination it was found illusory as any ground of further proceeding. If Mr. Wilson had a *canard* in his keeping, he might think it well to fly it at such a gossip-monger as Captain Thompson evidently was. The matter, however, is worth setting down.

The following anecdote of polite society, as illustrated by *Lord Sandwich's* musical parties, is amusing:—

His Lordship has an easy method of procuring his musick. The rule was, that all performers who were paid for their labour and journey eat with the servants, but those who preferred my lord's table had also the choice of beds as they arrived and were made his convivial companions. Few gave up the drawing-room for the dripping-pan.

The following refers to Macklin, a popular actor of the day, best known perhaps by his playing Shylock, in which part Bell's *Shakspeare*, to which Captain Thompson it elsewhere appears subscribed, gave his portrait as a frontispiece to *The Merchant of Venice*. The visitors to the National Portrait Gallery may remember a group there representing him performing the same part in private before *Lord Mansfield*:—

In 1744 Maclin was a principal in the theatre at Portsmouth, where they picked up Tom Davies, the author. One night the performance was interrupted by two lieutenants, *Wager* and *Norris*, and while Maclin and Marshall were on the stage they were attacked by them with swords. Marshall defended himself gallantly, and Maclin seizing a truncheon so belaboured *Norris* that he gained a complete victory. This so incensed the fleet, the house was shut up until they begg'd pardon of the sea-officers. Maclin met at the Coffee house and made an elegant and sensible apology for himself, but as for his friend Marshall he could say little of a pacifick nature, for all the answer he could obtain was, He should wear his sword and stick, and defend

himself where he met his foe—"but, gentlemen, I assure you he is called crack-brained Marshall." The apology was received and the House opened, but Marshall would hear no terms, but insisted on it that he came into the town with his sword on. The preliminaries were granted, and these two officers, beaten by the *Dramatis personæ*, proved to be afterwards Sir John Norris and Sir Charles Wager.

We pass on to the *Johnsoniana* of this volume, not adding anything of first-rate interest to our already full-length acquaintance with "the Sage," but still worthy of a few remarks in connection with certain well-established passages in his later life. Captain Thompson's acquaintance with him seems to have been of recent formation when the journal first mentions him, and was, we may probably conjecture, owing to Tom Davies, mentioned several times by Boswell, who was a common friend to the two. We will string these notices together as they occur, or nearly so. The first occurrence of his name is on November 15, 1784, when Captain Thompson had returned from the *solus cum sola* fascinations of "Emma" and Mortlake to spend the winter in town.

It was told me to-day by unquestionable authority that Dr. Johnson, in consequence of his ill-health, had desired the Chancellor *Thurlow* to petition the Council for an addition of 200*l.* a year to his salary for 4 years, to enable him to visit the south of France for his health. The answer by the Chancellor was, that if it was but 20*l.*, the poverty of the State could not afford it. But *Thurlow* added, who is no more famed for charity than courtesy, that he might make him his banker and draw for 500*l.* This Dr. Johnson nobly and generously refused. I waited on his common friend, Tom Davies, who confirmed the above.

21st.—Dr. Johnson sent to thank me for my offer of pecuniary assistance, and when Davies told him, he said "that he never before heard of such generosity."

29th.—I waited on poor Dr. Johnson, whom I found but very indifferent in health and spirits. Nay his legs were much swelled, which threatened more than I dare describe.

Dec. 1.—T. Davies was to-day with Dr. Johnson, and while Dr. Brocklesby was present. At this time Mr. Stevens came up without sending in his name, when Dr. J. emphatically said, "Don't leave me, I will not trust myself with this flagitious man."

5th.—Alas ! I received an unfavourable report of Dr. Johnson's indisposition. Crookshanks scarified his legs. Davies said to me he seem'd to increase his fears as the King of Terrore approached him. He only said "be a good Christian."

10th.—I called on Dr. Johnson to-day. He was no better.

14th.—Alas ! the miserable tidings are come, and the dissolution of Dr. Johnson. I called on him on Sunday, but found he was so restless with pain that he could not lie or sit, and withall fearfull of his approaching end. With him fell the pride, the ornament of this country, the first man in mental powers, and the purest in Christian faith and practise. He was the first moral philosopher in Europe, and a man of the strongest abilities, natural and acquired.

15th.—I visited T. Davies, the friend of Dr. Johnson, and I found Sir J. Reynolds was the executor and director of his posthumous matters. We have discovered but 2,000*l.* in the 3 per cents., and Davies values his library at only 30*l.* He says he was indifferent about books, as to their editions.

This negotiation for an increase of Dr. Johnson's pension came to an unsuccessful close in August 1784, while both he and Captain Thompson were out of town. Johnson arrived in London, as we learn from Boswell, the day after the first date of the preceding entries. It appears from Boswell, on Johnson's own authority, that Dr. Brocklesby, one of his

medical attendants, had likewise offered Johnson a hundred a year for his life. The Captain, as above, records a similar offer from himself. We do not doubt that there were others, or at any rate would have been, had it not by this time become known that Johnson steadfastly declined such extraordinary obligations. His physicians and surgeon, however, refused any fees for their attendance. The latter, mentioned in one of the above extracts, is called "Cruikshank" by Boswell, who records, in reference probably to the operation there mentioned, that Johnson himself seconded his surgeon's efforts "by making incisions in his body with his own hand," and "with his usual resolute defiance of pain, cut deep when he thought that the latter had done it too tenderly. The total of Johnson's property, as stated by Boswell, who cites his will, agrees nearly enough with Thompson's estimate of 2,000*l.*; but only 1,000*l.* was in the three per cents. We should infer from the above dates that Thompson knew Dr. Johnson before the period at which the journal commences. If his introduction to so remarkable a man had taken place during the first few months of it, before his appointment to and voyage in the *Grampus*, we should certainly have had some mention of it. And on Johnson's return to town in his last illness, we find our Captain under circumstances which bespeak some degree of friendly acquaintance.

The books which Davies appears to have valued at thirty pounds, realized (Boswell, note) two-hundred and forty-seven pounds nine shillings. They probably fetched, as Boswell intimates, a "fancy" price, "many people being desirous to have a book which had belonged to Dr. Johnson." Their intrinsic value may probably not have been above the lower estimate. We continue the extracts:—

Dec. 19.—I saw some of Dr. Johnson's friends, it was agreed on, as I had no invitation, that I should not go to the burying, which is ordered to be in Westminster Abbey at eleven to-morrow in the morning. I find that Dr. J. and Sir Jos. Reynolds had some harsh words, just before he died. Sir Jos. got the Chancellor Thurlow's letter from him, and by showing it about it got into the public prints, which offended this good, great man. Before he died he made the deaf Knight of the Brush make him 3 promises that, "He forgave him thirty pounds he owed him; that he did not paint on the Sabbath; and that he always read the Scriptures upon that day."

Boswell knows nothing of the "harsh words" aforesaid, nor mentions the publication of the letter of Lord Thurlow. He does mention that Reynolds took a copy of Johnson's reply and "showed it to some of his friends," by which means "it found its way into the newspapers and magazines." This perhaps is the fact of which Thompson's anecdote as above is a slight distortion. The publication of either letter would have substantially the same effect, and Johnson was entitled to resent, and probably did resent, if he knew it, such divulging of private matters.

Dec. 27.—No man was so hurt as Murphy at not being mentioned by Dr. Johnson in his will.

This probably refers to some bequests of books made by Johnson to certain friends. Boswell mentions the fact that the omission of the

names of many of his best friends among those to whom books were left and of Murphy's among others, occasioned some remark at the time, and accounts for the fact by Johnson's probable failure of memory as vital power declined, or that he might have shown the persons in question "such previous proofs of his regard, that it was not necessary to crowd his will with their names." The following anecdote of the funeral, although recorded later (January 20, 1785), will not be out of place here:—

The burial of *Dr. Johnson* was attended with a whimsical circumstance. Just as the procession was going to advance into the Abbey, *Sir J. Banks* was heard to be very clamorous, having no scarf, and in the honorary post of poll-bearer. It was discovered *Dr. Brocklesby* had one, and unentitled; so the undertaker strip'd him, and zodiacked *Sir Joseph*. The master of the mortuary ceremonies, seeing *Mr. Colman* the last of the poll-bearers, moved him up gradation from the last to the first, apologizing at the same time to him, that he placed him first, as he was so small he would not be seen behind.

Here follows Wilkes' estimate of Johnson, which sounds very genuine as an anecdote, and expresses a view which has found extensive acceptance:—

Dec. 24.—I saw Wilkes to-day at his house in Prince's Court. He immediately began on the panegyrics of Dr. Johnson.—“The papers call him a good Christian and the luminary of learning; as for his faith, the man would believe anything that believed in the Cock Lane ghost; and who can deserve the title of the luminary of learning, that spoil'd the English language?” This is witty and pointed, but does not effect the character of Dr. Johnson.

Thompson was no doubt quite right that a character for a high, perhaps the highest current, degree of learning is not inconsistent with a false literary style; nay, rather that those very faults, though Thompson of course could not see them, which were the ground of Wilkes' remark arose from the extent to which the weight of dead language had overlaid Johnson's great native vigour of expression. The happy remarks of Lord Macaulay on his two styles, and his occasional translation from one of them into the other, will occur to most readers. It should, however, be borne in mind that nearly all persons who write much have a more familiar style and a more formal one. The distinction between the sock and the buskin is inherent in human nature. But Johnson's buskins were as high as ordinary stilts.

As regards Johnson's belief in the supernatural, it is by no means true that he gave an unreasoning acquiescence to any such stories. For instance, in a conversation recorded by Boswell (vol. iii., p. 321, ed. 1807,) on a ghost story believed by John Wesley, that an apparition had directed "application to be made to an attorney, at the same time saying that the attorney would do nothing, which proved to be a fact," the conversation, which was with Miss Seward, runs as follows:—

"This (says John Wesley) is a proof that a ghost knows our thoughts. Now (laughing) it is not necessary to know our thoughts to tell that an attorney will sometimes do nothing. Charles Wesley, who is a more stationary man, does not believe

the story. I am sorry that John did not take more pains to inquire into the evidence for it." *Miss Seward* (with an incredulous smile) : "What, sir, about a ghost?" *Johnson* (with solemn vehemence) : "Yes, madam; this is a question which, after five thousand years, is yet undecided; a question, whether in theology or philosophy, one of the most important that can come before the human understanding."

It is worth while to add that *Johnson* did *not* believe in the now notorious imposture of Cock Lane; and it is a remarkable instance of the pertinacity of ill-nature common among mankind that the caricature drawn by Churchill of *Johnson*, under the name of Pomposo, imputing such belief to him, should have stuck to his memory in spite of the best contemporary evidence to the contrary. The belief in the "ghost" having become popular, *Johnson* did his best in assisting the exposure of it, and the proceedings in which, with that view, he bore a part are open to no reflection on the score of credulity, save from such as prejudge beforehand the question by deciding that all spiritual visitations are impossible. No doubt the detail of those proceedings, when contrasted with the breakdown of the story which they brought about, is ludicrous. But from the point of view of an investigator wishing to disabuse the public mind of a mischievous superstition, it is not easy to say what other course should have been taken, or what course, if taken, would not have had a similarly ludicrous effect. Of course *Johnson* might conceivably have sided with those who ridiculed the whole matter *ab initio*, as unworthy of a moment's serious thought. But such a course would have convinced none of the dupes, of whom *Boswell* intimates there were many, if it had not rather served to root them in their belief. To test the evidence and show its untrustworthiness, seems on such occasions a wiser and more humane course, considering the tendency of the human mind, than to reject all evidence as inadmissible on such a question, and to dismiss the notion itself as antecedently absurd. Against such a theory *Johnson*, as seen from the conversation extracted above, thought it right to protest. It was with him a question of evidence in each individual case. On the general question he only says, "It is as yet undecided,"—a much wiser and more cautious conclusion, surely, than that of those who condemn him for not rejecting at once the supposition that evidence in such a case could possibly be worth investigating.

This point is worth dwelling upon, because Lord Macaulay, in a passage to which allusion has already been made, says of *Johnson*, "He began to be credulous precisely at the point where the most credulous people begin to be sceptical. . . . He related with a grave face how old Mr. Cave, of St. John's Gate, saw a ghost, and how this ghost was something of a shadowy being." Now let the reader turn to the passage in *Boswell* on which this is founded (vol. ii., p. 181).

Talking of ghosts, he said he knew one friend, who was an honest man and a sensible man, who told him he had seen a ghost; old Mr. Edward Cave, the printer at St. John's Gate. He said Mr. Cave did not like to talk of it, and seemed to be in a great horror whenever it was mentioned. *Boswell*: "Pray, sir, what did he say was the appearance?" *Johnson*: "Why, sir, something of a shadowy being."

Thus it comes out that, whereas Lord Macaulay puts the story on the shoulders of Johnson, all he stated was that Mr. Cave "told him" so. Not only the way in which the anecdote is introduced by Boswell, at second hand, but the sequel of the remarks, and the answer elicited by Boswell's inquiries, make it rest so unmistakably on the authority of Cave that the noble critic's error here is the less pardonable. We can fancy the indignant asperity with which Lord Macaulay would have pounced upon and exposed such a confusion of evidence in Southey or Croker, or any writer to whom he was antipathetic! He repeats the vulgar clamour of Wilkes and the scoffers, and adds to it other misstatements of his own. Thus, as regards the Cock Lane ghost story, in connection with the passage above quoted regarding John Wesley, he says, "Johnson went himself on a ghost hunt to Cock Lane, and was angry with John Wesley for not following up another scent of the same kind with proper spirit and perseverance." As we found in the story about Cave the *suppressio veri*, so here we have the *suggestio falsi*. So far as a "hunt" implies an expectation of finding the game, the word is inapplicable to Johnson's Cock Lane errand. He went with the opposite expectation, if with any. The last quoted words further imply that John Wesley pooh-pooh'd the story, but that Johnson thought there was reason to regard it seriously, and that Wesley might have found that reason had he sought it. What could be more completely opposite to the fact? The fact was, as shown in the extract given above, that *John Wesley believed the story*, and that *Johnson thought him credulous* as believing without duly examining the evidence. Lord Macaulay does not, indeed, say, but suggests that Johnson blamed Wesley for erring on the side of incredulity; the fact was Johnson thought Wesley erred on the side of credulity; whilst of "anger" on Johnson's part there is nothing to suggest a suspicion; or rather, the whole tone of his remarks, as given by Boswell, is one of good-humoured raillery. It is merely a rhetorical amplification of the critic's own. "I am sorry John did not take more pains to inquire," is distorted into "Johnson was angry." By a succession of little ingenious twists the tale is made to bear exactly the opposite complexion to the natural one; and the difference which at last results is just that which exists between the curve and the straight line which touches it at a single point only. The unhappy passion for climax and antithesis often thus leads this polished writer to sacrifice truth to point. He wrote with that rhetorical love for a consummate contrast which is hardly consistent with the task of the historical critic. He is continually either arraying a hero in wings and glory, or tarring and feathering some *bête noir*. Thus he gilds Dutch William, and thus he bedaubs Dr. Johnson. Political biography was for him a chessboard of alternate black squares and white. Given the political opinions of his subject, you may always tell beforehand which line he will take. And then, the edifying indignation with which he pursues similar ingenious distortions of historical fact in others! However, he only treated Johnson as Johnson, on perceiving that he was

"a vile Whig, sir," would undoubtedly have treated him ; and did, in fact, treat Milton.

To return, however, from Lord Macaulay to Captain Thompson. A Mr. Ben Wilson comes in as authority for the two next anecdotes, who, to judge from the zeal for royalty which the former of them shows, was probably the same "Mr. Wilson" mentioned in a previous one as having been private secretary to the Duke of York, and whom we shall not probably be far wrong in ranking as a gossip-monger.

Dec. 19.—Ben Wilson took much pains to say that it was his Majesty's intention he (Johnson) should be relieved, but the Chancellor was so hasty and impetuous that he marr'd the good royal intention. I silenced Wilson by saying, "Did it become the King of Great Britain to consider fourteen days whether his council should relieve him, when he might have done it by putting his hand in his pocket ? Say no more in defence of royal munificence, when I did it myself, though a mean subject, the moment I heard of the good man's distress."

Captain Thompson obviously intends that it was antithetically the "subject" who was in fact "munificent," and the monarch who was in fact "mean;" but we have no doubt that it "silenced" the royal advocate ; although the implied argument that a king can or ought to do any act of kindness which any subject can or ought to do, is of course fallacious. The next is as follows :—

Mr. Ben Wilson told me an anecdote this day, which could but be told by him. He said that Lord Chesterfield had been acquainted with *Johnson* long before the acting of *Irene* in 1749, but that he had never done anything for him ; that J. used to wait for hours in his hall with the servants in a disregarded state. On the appearance of *Irene* he asked his lordship to protect it, and he refused him. This wearied out J.'s patience, and he wrote his lordship a long, pointed, and severe letter ; so much so, that his lordship was much agitated on the perusal of it ; and Wilson and Sir Thomas Robinson being present, after discussing its matter, it was agreed that they should wait on J., to soften his resentment in the best manner they could. They found him in his lodgings, and so small a room that there was but room for a stool, on which he sat, the rest of the room being covered with books. He received them sitting, and Sir Thomas began with a tedious preface of his virtues and abilities, and of Lord Chesterfield's inclination to serve him ; adding, if I were a man of fortune I would give you 500*l.* directly. "Sir," says Johnson, "if you or any other man made me such an offer, I would kick him downstairs." Sir Thomas wished to parry this by an awkward pleasantry, "that he should like to be kick'd up for such a sum." This not succeeding with the Stoick, he told him if he would put his name to his dictionary, his lordship would give him a handsome sum of money, and *Johnson* made no reply.

Now we have little difficulty in coming to the conclusion that the whole of the above is an ingenious distortion of the facts relating to the celebrated letter addressed by Johnson to Lord Chesterfield when the *Dictionary* was coming out, and dated in 1755 (*Boswell*, vol. i. p. 236, folio). *Irene* was brought out by Garrick six years before, in 1749. Had such a letter, "long, pointed, and severe," been written then, Johnson would not have gone on expecting, as it seems he did, help and countenance from Lord Chesterfield. "Sir," he said to *Boswell* (p. 235), "after making great professions, he had for many years taken no notice

of me. But when my dictionary was coming out, he fell a scribbling in *The World* about it. Upon which I wrote him a letter expressed in civil terms, but such as might show him that I did not mind what he said or wrote, and that I had done with him."

This relates to the real letter written in 1755, and unless we are prepared to reject its date, which is part of the letter itself, its tenor, and all the circumstances in connection with it, it must be held as excluding the possibility of any such letter as that described by Ben Wilson having been written in 1749. The "great professions" to which Johnson refers were probably the countenance given by Lord Chesterfield to the "plan" of the Dictionary when addressed by him to Lord Chesterfield in 1747 (*ib.* p. 161). The words "he had for many years taken no notice of me" are inconsistent with any such rupture of the relations of expectancy as Ben Wilson's supposed letter would force us to conclude took place only two years later. Above all, such a letter from himself in 1749 is inconsistent with Johnson's further statement to Boswell (*ib.* p. 232-3), "that there never was any particular incident which produced a quarrel between Lord Chesterfield and him, but that his lordship's continued neglect was the reason why he resolved to have no connection with him." He must have known that such a previous letter from himself, had it been written, was precisely such a "particular incident." The only remaining supposition is that the real letter belongs to the year 1749, that Boswell misdates it, and that Wilson corrects him. But the allusion to the death of his wife, which one of its paragraphs contains, precludes this, for she lived till 1752. The behaviour imputed to Lord Chesterfield of sending an embassy to propitiate Johnson after such a letter is equally impossible for us to accept, and is the greatest contrast possible to the careful silence and studied indifference with which he treated the real letter in 1755 (*ib.* p. 240-1). Above all, it is inconceivable that Lord Chesterfield should have written in *The World* two letters full of propitiatory blandishments when the Dictionary was coming out, if his advances on receiving the "plan" of that work in 1747 had been rudely snubbed in 1749. The real story was thirty years old when Thompson received the anecdote from Wilson. The latter had had time to forget the circumstances, if he had heard them at the time, and to dress up the fact of the authentic letter in new ones, which perhaps he thought flattered his own self-importance. Above all, there is no proof that he ever told the story before Johnson was dead. But unless his passion for fiction had become so morbid that he failed to distinguish truth from falsehood, it would seem likely that he was sent with some overture from Lord Chesterfield to Johnson, in connection perhaps with the former's letters in *The World*, having for its object the fishing for a dedication of the Dictionary. The difficulty then remains of the total silence of Johnson about any such facts in his communications with Boswell. Those communications seem to have been very full, and Johnson seems to have been proud of the part he had played. Is it likely he would have forgotten the fact, or failed to mention it, if he had thus received and snubbed

in person a brace of envoys from Lord Chesterfield? We think the negative argument here overweighs the probability that there was even the grain of truth we have just been supposing possible in Ben Wilson's anecdote; and we incline to class his statement with that of George IV., that he had led a charge of cavalry in person at Waterloo.

The last mention of Dr. Johnson in this diary, occurs within a page of its close, under the date of March 19th, 1785, the entry relating to a dinner with Sir Francis Sykes.

The Hon. Miss Moncton was here, a modern Sappho with less success in a Phaon than the lamenter of Mytilene. She talked of her blue-stocking club of philosophers and has attempted to be a wit over wise men. Dr. Johnson used to frequent her Sabbath orgies. I could discover nothing in her but a passion for monkeys. She was an impudent, saucy, bold woman of fashion, that said everything loud more modest women would have suppressed.

In illustration of this, a paragraph from Boswell (IV. 114) shall be extracted:—

Johnson was prevailed on to come sometimes into these circles, and did not think himself too grave even for the lively Miss Monckton (now Countess of Corke) who used to have the finest *bit of blue* at the house of her mother Lady Galway. Her vivacity enchanted the sage, and they used to talk together with all imaginable ease. A singular instance happened one evening, when she insisted that some of Sterne's writings were very pathetic. Johnson bluntly denied it. "I am sure, (said she) they have affected me." "Why, (said Johnson smiling and rolling himself about) that is because, dearest, you're a dunce." When she sometime afterwards mentioned this to him he said, with equal truth and politeness, "Madam, if I had thought so, I certainly should not have said it."

It appears to have been at the same house that Boswell, having previously taken at the Duke of Montrose's, in Johnson's company, more wine than was good for him, behaved with the offensive impertinence which he himself duly records, together with a copy of verses in which, when the next day brought penitence, he besought the lady's pardon. One anecdote has been run over, but as nothing depends on its date, it may as well come here. It is one given rather differently by Boswell:—

Maclin (Macklin, the player) related a singular conversation he once had with the late Dr. Johnson. J. asserted the Turkish government was the best, and Brook, who wrote the Earl of Essex, quoted,

"Who rules o'er freemen should himself be free;"

when J. absurdly answered, "You may as well say,

"Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat."

This gave J. the laugh against Brook.

We come next to a string of entries having reference to Sheridan. They are remarkable as relating to things which appear to have lain within Thompson's knowledge, and persons with whom he was acquainted. They seem to come at first hand and on the best authority. As, however, Thompson appears to have detested Sheridan, partly on political and patriotic grounds, and partly owing to some dramatic and literary crosses which he seems to have sustained at Sheridan's hands, they must be

taken with caution. The first entry is dated Nov. 8th, 1784. It is as follows :—

I was with Mr. Lacy to-day, who, on the presumption of his ability, as allowed by the critics on his last performance at Colman's Theatre, had spoke to *Sheridan*, who has not paid him for his moiety of the theatre, and has an arrear due to him of 4,000*l.* on his annuity. He waited on *Linley*, and *Ford*, and they mutually shut the door upon him, offering him a benefit for which he might play. He spurned this with contempt, and on his return home was arrested on the suit of R. Yates for 140*l.* for salary and clothes, for he is liable for all the debts. When he came to look for *Sheridan* he was gone to Chatsworth. So blushing scoundrel never surely existed as this swindling member for Stafford.

In explanation of this it should be mentioned that Lacy had been Garrick's partner in Drury Lane Theatre, that when Garrick retired, Sheridan, Linley, and Ford bought his share among them, and subsequently found means to persuade Lacy to sell them his moiety too. Before this last transaction, however, Lacy, in order to strengthen his own interest in the house against Sheridan and Co., sought to bring in two persons named by Moore in his Life of Sheridan (vol. I., p. 198, ed. 1827), Captain Thomson and Mr. Langford, or perhaps wished to be out of it, and to dispose of his moiety to them. The first of the two can hardly have been any other than the author of this diary, although Moore spells his name without the *p*. We learn from Moore further, that Sheridan in his opposition to Lacy (on one occasion when their interests clashed)—

Had proceeded to the extremity of seceding from his own duties at the theatre, and inducing the principal actors to adopt the same line of conduct. Lacy was driven into a corner, but, according to a periodical of 1776 which Moore quotes, "acted with great temper and moderation; and in order that the public might not be wholly disappointed he brought on old stock plays—his brother manager having robbed him of the means and instruments to do otherwise by taking away the performers."

This was a foul blow on Sheridan's part, and, as far as we gather from Moore's narrative, entirely unprovoked by any unjustifiable conduct of Lacy's. Moore does not attempt to palliate it in any way, from which we feel sure that it was, in fact, as outrageous as it appears. The important point to our present purpose, however, is, that the transaction shows Thompson as an ally of Lacy in theatrical speculation, and the would-be purchaser of some portion of Drury Lane Theatre, which intention was frustrated by the counter-machinations of Sheridan. We see then where the shoe pinches, when Thompson declaims against the demerits of the "member for Stafford." Under the date of January 15th, 1785, Captain Thompson mentions that a friend of his, one Captain Vaughan, Justice of Peace for Westminster and dramatic author, produced a comedy called *The Templar*, "which Sheridan promised should be done," i. e. brought out, "at Drury Lane," but "which the managers of that theatre afterwards declined, as not sufficiently finished for their stage, though it had received the applauses of all the wits of the age;" and, what is more to our present purpose, Thompson adds, "I'll answer for the

prologue being the best that ever was written, for I wrote it myself." Having thus stood sponsor for *The Templar*, and found it excluded from the Drury Lane stage after its reception having been promised by Sheridan, Captain Thompson may probably have felt his wrath wax hot against the man whom he would regard as having duped the author whom he had befriended. Thompson's own dramatic smatterings might have had a chance of seeing lamp-light if he could have secured a share in Drury Lane. The Sheridan firm seem to have viewed it as their interest to oust him from such a chance. Hence, probably, a good deal of the bitterness with which he constantly speaks of Sheridan. Under the date of Nov. 14th, 1784, we find—

Mr. Lacy showed me Linley's letter, refusing him to stand on Drury boards. He determined to write Sheridan. I would have had him determined to cut his throat.

Dec. 5th.—I called on Mr. Lacy, with whom I found *Sheridan*—the Devil whispering in the ear of Adam. One Lutter a Jew had put an execution in Drury Theatre for £1,500 on the scenes and wardrobe. *Sheridan* wanted him to influence the Jew to withdraw the execution. The Jew's implacable—he'll have flesh or money. Old *Ford* is in fits and *Linley*'s out of tune, while *Wallis* on the part of Mrs. Garrick, swears he'll foreclose. *Mrs. Sheridan* says her gentle husband was agitated like *Werther*. She went to the country, and he to the humhums to recruit, tho' no man has dealt so roundly in hums. If he has a feeling left he must feel the trigger of a pistol : the roof of his house is off to eject him. Where is he to hide his devoted head ?

The last allusion is explained by another entry a few days earlier.—

Sir T. *Clavering* to eject *Sheridan* unroof'd his house. The newspapers have ceased to satirize *Sheridan* or the P. of Wales. His treasury soon stopp'd the mouth of every editor.

Dec. 7.—I saw Mr. *Lacy*, who signed a discharge for *Sheridan* to move the execution from the playhouse on their indemnification. He is now liable to Lutter's production and has taken their security, tho' they could not pay the debt. So easy, so placid, so meek, so weak, so honest a man I never met. A jail must now be alone his fate. A wife ready to lie in and four starving children could not move him to save himself and them ; but he must serve the man that has plundered him of everything.

The above extracts show that amid the stormy struggles of Parliament, Sheridan was far from having a quiet life of it at Drury Lane. Thompson evidently regarded him as the chief offender, and Lacy as the victim. Lacy, we may well suppose, found Sheridan a wild and shiftless manager, as, we have seen reason to think, he was an unscrupulous partner. With scenery and wardrobe under sequestration, the first thing was to get rid of the Jew who had this awkward lien upon them. Lacy, it appears, had parted with his share in the Theatre, amounting to half its value, to Sheridan and Co., who were now, in point of form, the sole proprietors, but had never paid Lacy for it. What the annuity was, on account of which 4,000*l.* of arrears was due—evidently to Lacy, although in Thompson's careless style it reads as if to Sheridan—is not clear. It might be supposed that an annuity out of the profits of management might have been the consideration for which Lacy had parted with his moiety, but the entry above quoted speaks as if the money value of that

share, *plus* the arrears of annuity, was due to Lacy. All that we can make out of it is, that Lacy, having never received in any shape value for what he had surrendered, had so far an interest still in the fortunes of the house, as that in its rescue from the clutches of the Jew lay his only chance of ever being paid his money. He therefore became liable for the sum claimed, we must suppose, by the Jew, in order to induce the latter to withdraw the execution. The Sheridan treasury was notoriously penniless, and yet Lacy accepted some bond from it as security to indemnify him for becoming thus liable to the Jew. A more rotten reed on which to lean cannot well be conceived. Besides all this, we have a further complication from a claim of Mrs. Garrick, the widow of the famous actor and manager, who, it seems, had a mortgage on the house or some of its properties. The weakness of Lacy in yielding to Sheridan's solicitations under these circumstances, is what draws forth the indignant comments of his friend Thompson. Certainly the powers of Sheridan in exercising fascination over the sources of supply, could hardly have received a higher tribute. To give greater piquancy to the whole embroilment, we have Sheridan in a roofless house in the month of December, driven to flee to the "Hummums" for shelter. Neither the *School for Scandal* nor *The Rivals* contains any situation quite equal to this. Embarrassments do not seem to have lightened as the season advanced. We read on Dec. 27th—

The Opera and Drury Lane Theatre are in a bad state, unfrequented and cold houses.

The next step in the dramatic development will not surprise the reader :—

Feb. 12, 1785.—Sheridan the parliamentary impostor and swindler now proved all his apostacy, and the execution of £1,500 which Lacy took out of the théâtre he had suffered to revert to him.

13th.—Messrs. Bean, and Sainsbury the city alderman and tobacconist, paid Lutter the Jew's debt, Sheridan having broken every promise as a man of honesty ; after which they put an execution in the theatre for £2,000.

Thus the fangs of destiny have closed on Lacy ; the Jew has sold him up or has got his body. Sheridan, the harlequin of finance, has visited the city and "raised the wind," brought an alderman and tobacconist to the rescue, and redeemed the profitless carcase of Lacy, and all this at the trifling cost of adding over 30 per cent to the debt in two months ! By manipulating his resources in this brilliant way, the 1,500*l.* has grown to 2,000*l.*, and the cold shade of "an execution" falls again on Drury Lane.

In that state we are sorry to leave it, but here the curtain falls on the "Charles Surface" of real life, with his friend "Mr. Premium" and without his "Uncle Noll." In plainer words this is the last mention we have of any of the parties in question, although the diary itself goes on to the 25th of the next month. It is saddening to find that "Uncle Noll," the *deus ex machina* who sets all straight in the fictitious drama should be the only part wanting in the living one. But the most curious feature of

the whole is, that of all these transactions, Thomas Moore, Esquire, the biographer of Sheridan, knows absolutely nothing. You would never gather from his rosy-tinted pages, that Sheridan had any acquaintance with "one Lutter a Jew," or even, in quest of a friend in need, went east of Temple Bar. You would never suspect that a tile of Sheridan's house had been loose, or that a hair had been rumpled on a single wig in the Drury wardrobe. Thomas Moore is a truly Olympian biographer. Here is a typical passage :—

There was indeed something mysterious and miraculous about all his acquisitions whether in love, in learning, in wit, or in wealth. How or when his stock of knowledge was laid in nobody knew; it was as much a matter of marvel to those who never saw him read, as the mode of existence of the chameleon has been to those who fancied it never eat. His advances in the heart of his mistress were, as we have seen, equally trackless and inaudible—and his triumph was the first that even rivals knew of his love. In like manner the productions of his wit took the world by surprise,—being perfected in secret till ready for display, and then seeming to break from under the cloud of his indolence in full maturity of splendour. His financial resources had no less an air of magic about them, and the mode in which he conjured up at this time the money for his first purchase into the theatre, remains as far as I can learn still a mystery.

A solution of the "mystery" is perhaps suggested by the above extracts. They suggest that the divining-rod used was a very vulgar twig indeed, and that the deities invoked were "one Lutter a Jew of Harley Street," and others unnamed—many a dingy prototype of "little Premium" and his "friend," who was "an unconscionable dog." We seem to see Sheridan holding a levée of such in his roofless house, elbowing his way through a crowd of such in the lobby of St. Stephen's, or holding them at bay in the manager's office at Drury Lane, tiding over one such difficulty after another by sheer dint of luck, audacity, and fascination, till at last the spell would work no more, and he died friendless and alone beneath the bailiff's eye. Of his end Moore gives a sad and touching picture, but of all the means so "germane" to that end he seems unconscious, unless it be that he wilfully ignored them.

We have seen that Captain Thompson had a large and varied acquaintance. He seems to have had the relish for gossip which tends in that direction; and, while it makes the pages of his journal teem with anecdote, impairs their value as testimony on any disputed point. We will here throw together a few of those which seem of the most striking interest. Here are a few notices of the tales then afloat regarding the early debauchery of George, Prince of Wales :—

Sept. 25, 1784.—A gentleman of veracity said at his table that the Prince of Wales was now grown so thoroughly debauched that he got speechless drunk every day after dinner. Heaven, what a prospect for England!

Dec. 1.—Mr. Angelo told me a piece of duplicity and ungenerous conduct in the Prince of Wales, which will for ever do him discredit, but it marks the man who has the vices of Harry the Fifth without one of his virtues. He told Angelo, as soon as his household was established, he would give Mrs. Angelo a good place, to support her and her family, and held out his hand to the old florid upright Italian to kiss. This he used as an introduction for Lord Malden to bring letters to her two fair and

beautiful daughters, Sophia and Ann. The mother detected the disingenuous conduct, and wrote a letter with the proper resentment of her bosom ; the Prince read it, and with great *sang froid* said, "The woman may be right."

Jan. 17, 1785.—Sir Geo. Young, whom I had cautioned lest he should lose his yacht (*sic*), waited on the Prince of Wales, his patron, to-day. Past one his Highness gave him an audience in bed. He had been up all night. Alas, thoughtless youth !

Jan. 18, 1785.—The Prince being on a visit to Mrs. Hubbart in the country, sent his respects to Sir Abraham Hume, and he would sup with him on a named day, and beg'd the time might be made 12 o'clock. The Prince's condescension highly flattered Sir Abm. ; the fatted calf was killed, and the best qual. in the circle of his vicinity bidden. Twelve o'clock came—1—2—3—4, and no prince ; when Sir Ab. with the best face that could be called up on such disappointment was assumed (*sic*). The supper being half done, in came the Prince. All thrown into confusion and chaos. He took the curule chair, lean'd his head on his hand, play'd with a bit of dowy bread, and looked royally sulky. Sir Abm. attentive to his illustrious guest, thought a song might divert the royal dumps, when a fair lady began to canzonet :—

Prince grew bolder and bolder,
And cock'd up his shoulder

As fierce as great Jupiter Hammon ;

Rose from his seat, when aback of her chair, slip'd down, crawled out, disappeared, and returned to Mrs. Hubbart's, where he finished a festive evening.

Feb 5, 1785.—We had a masquerade at the opera. No people of fashion. The Prince of Wales box'd with Lord Hervey in a circle of —. "Hal rob me the exchequer."

Feb. 26.—The intemperance of the Prince of Wales is such that the covers of his tables is (*sic*) alone more than his income. He gets drunk every day after dinner, and dances after 12 at night ; the last may carry off the intemperance of the first.

Mar. 2, 1785.—The Prince having persuaded Lady Payne to give him 2 balls the recreant knight, her spouse, beat this lovely lady.

Mar. 19.—Dined with Sir Francis Sykes . . . Our company was Major J. Mackay He said yesterday the Prince had the severest drinking-batch he had known. He locked the doors himself . . . and St. Leger was the toastmaster. He said the Prince's table was a thousand a month, and his stables, 22,000*l.* a year.

The next extract is one which connects the Prince with Sheridan ; it belongs to a slightly earlier period, but as regards subject-matter is distinct.

Sept. 30, 1784.—Mr. Sheridan became very violent on an attack made on the true side of his character in the Post, under the signature of Neptune, who exposed him as an arrant swindler, and the Prince as a drunkard, who gave Sheridan in a fit of ebriety an unlimited draught on his treasury to find out the author. Sheridan bribed all presses and searched without success.

Now, certain draughts of verses appear in the diary signed "N," and one such has the words "Morning Post" written opposite on the page. It seems a probable guess then, that N. stands for Neptune, and that the "Neptune" of *The Post* who lampooned Sheridan and the Prince was no other than our Thompson. The only difficulty is, why, if so, in a journal meant for his private eye, did he not set it down as his ? It can only be answered, that when a man has become thoroughly used to a pseudonym, he identifies himself with that which it stands for, and to his

consciousness, therefore, "Neptune" and "Thompson" were equivalent terms. If he were writing for others to see, unless, indeed, he wished concealment, he would not do this, but would expressly state that the writer under the signature of "Neptune" was himself. That it would be quite in keeping with sentiments expressed concerning Sheridan and the Prince, for Thompson to have thus lampooned them, is manifest from many places of this journal, especially the extracts above given.

We have next collected a few relative to John Wilkes. One entry, containing his remarks on Johnson's credulity and spoiling the English language, has already been given among our *Johnsoniana* :—

Aug. 2, 1783.—I dined this day with Mr. Wilkes at his classick Tivoly at Kensington Gore which bandbox he has fitted up in the most elegant taste of amorous prints ; and this retreat is for him at 52 to solace himself in the arms of Mrs. Arnold—a mere Becky, and apparently without one requisite to entertain the elegant mind of a Wilkes ; but men are unequal in their pleasures. Mrs. Arnold has a beautiful child and a sensible little creature ; it is about six years old and possesses the tongue of Mr. Wilkes—I cannot conceive that he made the features so very different from any of his earlier performances . . . It was a pleasant day—but 'tis impossible to be otherwise with Wilkes.

Jan. 1, 1784.—Plymouth.—I read Johnstone's 3 vols. of *Juniper Jack*, a very inferior work to *Chrysal* or the *Reveries*. He touches at times on the character of Wilkes, but he paints with a trowel, and describes the man of the most finished manners and classical education in the style of St. Giles, and gives him a birth that would have disgraced Buckhorse.

Sept. 25, 1784.—I dined with Wilkes. He gave me a manuscript to peruse copied by Miss Wilkes in answer to the charges of one Durnford, a spirit-seller of the ward of Billingsgate, who had charged him with malpractices and false accounts as chamberlain, which he clearly and wittily refutes. He also brings the charge of impiety and injustice against him for altering and defacing Guildhall chappell, which Wilkes answers with much pleasantry and exposes the meddling ass.

Oct. 1784.—Now died Mr. Watson, a facetious man and an old member of the Beefsteak Club ; he was dry and whimsical, and made some songs which he sang with a dry pleasantry—the best of these was "Wilkes and 45." On our way to Kensington we called at Wilkes Cabinet d'Amour, where we saw his Mistress Arnold—an arrant Becky, not young, and plain. She said she had long known Miss Maria Linley at Bath, and that she was not quite so (word dropt) a character as I had drawn (*sic*) her. I replied, women had in general two characters the none (?) allowed them and that I had only drawn the angelick part of her.

Oct. 20, 1784.—I dined with Mr. Wilkes at Mr. Lesingham's in Kensington, one who had been very instrumental in obtaining his election for him—which Mr. W. had very nearly lost by a false decency of respect to his wife who was dead—for tho' he had not spoke to her for more than 20 years, he was so scrupulously nice to keep the house 10 days till she was burried.

Nov. 7.—Mr. Wilkes dined with me ; I never saw him more lively or witty. He insisted upon it that he proposed me to be a member of the Beefsteak Club—and to succeed Mr. Watson.

Jan. 30, 1785.—I have always marked, when a man is select (*sic*) for a butt or mark to shoot at, that he is good-natured and not wise. I never was in company with Wilkes, but he always selected some man to drive his witcisms at as a butt—some I can eumerate. . . . Rosanagen, John Churchill, C. Churchill, and particularly myself ; but he never gave me a shot that I did not return one as well ramm'd down as I could. Burnaby Green used to say, I should always be with him to curb his blasphemy and licentious talk.

We may illustrate this by Boswell's account of the dinner-party at Mr. Dilly's, at which he contrived that Wilkes and Johnson should meet and sit side by side at table. Boswell's ingenuity was tasked to the utmost to carry his plot through, and the affair was characterized by Burke as the *ne plus ultra* of diplomacy. He was rewarded by Wilkes and Johnson both turning upon him as the only Scotchman present, and making him their butt for the rest of the meeting.

A string of naval anecdotes, or relating to naval personages, ought not to be omitted.

Aug. 16, 1783.—I took Burgundy and champaigne with Lord Keppel, and gave him a turtle. A mixed company, but neither wit, humour or information. Sea captains can't speak with any degree of ease before their superiors.

Feb. 7, 1784 (Afloat).—The weather uncommonly cold, severe, and boisterous. In the evening I stood in for Torbay, willing to anchor therein. When I approached the Berry Head a sudden and violent tempest of wind, hail, and snow, with the wind at north, came on with uncommon impetuosity. A meteor of bright and quick descent seemed to dart upon the ship. I taked (*sic*) and stood to sea in a storm of winter combustibles. I do not remember to have passed a more disagreeable night. I exposed myself to the weather till after 12 o'clock, and I believe was the only man in the ship in such a tempest who went to rest on a basin of water-gruel. But the motion was so various, quick and fatiguing, that it was impossible to even rest, much more to sleep.

Feb. 13, 1784.—No place can vary so much in its aspect as Portsmouth—its colours and concubines ragged; the pavement grass-grown; sales of furniture every day; the coffee-house with scarce a marine officer; Dilly's and stages empty in and out; taverns and inns without customers, and yet the prices continue the same.

15. I paid a visit to Admiral Montague. A coarser, rougher, ruder sea monster never existed.

18. Mr. Montague celebrated the Queen's birth on board the *Queen*. I could not help remarking the apostacy of the company; tho' every man, from the Admiral to myself, owed his chair to Lord Keppel, yet they never drank him, but quaffed bumpers to Howe, the reigning Lord. Oh, man, what an apostate art thou! When I charged my glass to Lord K., I charged the table with a comment. The company was stupid and captainish, and the Admiral vulgar and rough.

26.—I received a letter from Lord Keppel, telling me my voyage was fixed.

30.—I received my sailing orders from Lord Howe, who took the *Unicorn* from my command, and confined my voyage to Barbadoes, by which he deprived me of every opportunity of promoting my officers or of enriching myself by a freight. I sent Lieut. Popham with an express to Lord Keppel, desiring I might resign the command. He beg'd me to go the voyage, and if he came to the Board, everything should be established to me to my wishes and his promise.

Oct. 6, 1784.—I sent a new code and mode of signals to Lord Howe, which, with four flags, 300 different signals may be made, and by form, not by colours, which is ever liable to deceive when the sun shines upon them.

(Here the four flags are sketched in pen and ink, labelled, as follows.)

Red.	White.	Blue.	Yellow.
A.	B.	C.	D.
Flag.	Cornet.	Guidon.	Pendent.

I received a polite answer in his way, dark as Erebus.

Nov. 28, 1784.—Lord Rodney set off to France, being ashamed of the evidence he gave on Johnston's trial, against Sutton, which was tantamount little better than a marine perjury. He gave on oath that he never knew a Court Martial held at Sea, though he had issued orders for many himself, and at which Lord Hood sat as president.

The trial referred to arose out of the battle with the French, under Suffrein, in the Cape de Verd Islands. Commodore Johnson, on the British side, brought Captain Sutton of the *Isis*, to a court-martial for not supporting him, but the latter was honourably acquitted.

Jan. 29, 1785.—I saw Lord Howe, who was as black as a Turnado—the Prince of Dusky Bay. He mumbled, he muttered, he did not utter. I sought some explanations of my voyage, but I might as well have consulted the King of the Jolliffs.

Feb. 26, 1785.—I received a dark, unintelligible letter from Lord Howe on the petition of the masters and surgeons to Parliament; indeed it was of that hidden and obscure quality, you may read it as well backward as forward.

Of this petition we learn, from another entry in the journal, that it was in the matter of the pay, or half-pay, of the petitioners, that it was introduced to the Lords by Lord Mahon, and that “Mr. Pitt promised to countenance the petitioners by relieving their necessities.” Our Captain adds, “This was a reviving cordial to my mind, and renewed my spirits, mirth, and pleasantry.”

March 16.—I dined with Lord Howe, First Commissioner: the Admirals Barrington and Campbell and Commodore Hotham were there. Pool and Henry, besides his lady and 3 daughters, as white as his Lordship is black. My Lord’s grandmother was a natural daughter of George the 1st, and she married a Mr. Howe of Ireland who was enabled to countenance her descent. Our dinner was superb, served in plate, excellent viands and rich wines. But there reigned a dulness, a coldness, a stiffness, a damned cramp that destroyed all conviviality. How very strange it is that a man shall collect all the choice good things for his own pride and his guest’s pallates, and yet never bring those very charming guests to his table, wit, goodnature, and affability.

His Lordship is saturnine, grave and dull—thick in his speech and not clear in his matter; all the strainers of Aristotle’s school would not thin or refine his oratory. He was born on a dark day of November, and never lost the colour of the time he first breathed in. Admiral Barrington mentioned that Admiral Vernon had given 300*l.* to Zambevari to go up with him in his balloon. His Lordship remarked it was a pity he should suffer by so much aerial folly. I replied, “Your Lordship has it in your power to save his character and cash.” “How so?” Captain T.—“By giving him an order as first Lord of the Admiralty not to leave the country.” My joke hit every muscle in the room but his Lordship’s. We pranced over this ostentatious display of cold plate for three hours and bowed; 5 such dinners in my future life would kill me.

Jan. 23, 1785.—I passed the day with my friend Jackson, where I met Mr. Masterman and Sir Geo. Young. Mr. Masterman ably described that our want of success in the last war arose from the faction of a party among our officers. Sir Sam Hood denied the assistance within his ability to Adm. Graves in the *Chesapeake*, and to Rodney on the 10th of April—for how could his squadron be equally engaged that had few or none killed? The plunder of the publick by all was too atrocious, from Sir E. Hughes in India to Admiral Arbuthnot in America who shared the profits of rapine with his secretary Green, who was known through the fleet to be the most profligate and prostituted knave.

The following are curious and characteristic:—

Jan. 29, 1784.—I saw Colman to-day; he had the shortest leg in a boot I ever beheld. He was going to instruct the Siddons in emphasis, for she is not in the habit of it. He declaimed violently against Sheridan as the first profligate and ingrate of the age.

Feb. 24, 1784.—This evening I went to see poor old Tom Davies. Found him unwell in his bed-room, petulant and garrulous. I gave him the character and skeleton of Master Stephen; it was written by myself and Garrick, tho' Garrick was too timid to publish it, and while the matter was in composition Garrick put himself in every attitude of Stevens. Garrick's excellence was mimicry. He was a Jack in apes.

Sept. 26, 1784.—Mr. Lacy having performed Hamlet a few nights ago at the Hay-market stage, and much against his friends' opinions, desired me to alter Hamlet. Mrs. Vaughan and I have often talked upon the subject. I always conclude the prince should be saved. Reading Tom Davies' miscellany, I think he makes some judicious remarks upon the errors of that play. The closet scene should have the portraits of the 2 brothers, which would relieve the sitting scene, for it is too long; and if the ghost appears on the platform in armour to the guard, there is no occasion for it in her dressing-room, particularly as he says,

“My father in his habit, as he lived!”

which could not be the habit of armour, for that was the dress of the martial field only. Criticks may observe it is no matter, as she does not see the ghost; and as for the change of vestment, it cannot be difficult for a spiritual agent to assume any form if one form.

I disapprove Garrick's alteration, but I wish to reject some parts but add nothing; it is like doing away the ancient rust of an old cathedral by oaker and white wash; I would kill him in the 3rd act at prayers as a usurper, a villain, and a religious hypocrite.

Oct. 1, 1784.—The Queen most graciously accepted of three Angora cows I brought from Africa.

9.—The African cows were delivered at the Queen's palace. I gave the carrier five guineas for his trouble, and the royal munificence ordered him one shilling more.

Nov. 11.—Tom Lowndes the bookseller died to-day, who never gave more for a novel than one guinea. To this poor Mrs. Gibbs can well subscribe. No pudding against an author's empty praise was ever admitted. He was the dullest rnde niggardly fellow that the muses ever made to sell their works. And yet this fellow made a fortune with other men's brains.

Nov. 15.—Quin was fine. When he was ask'd by what law did they behead King Charles the 1st? he replied, “By the laws he left!”

Nov. 18, 1784.—Mr. Lynn related to-day that the surgeons, in spite of the vigilance of the Irish Giant's friends, obtained the body for dissection. They made several attempts to bury it in the Thames, and to even convey it to Dover. But the body-hunters were too keen for all they aim'd at; and after keeping the corpse 14 days, they sold it to John Hunter for 100*l*. The heart was preserved, and was very large. . . . The stature of the skeleton measures 8 ft. 2 in.

Nov. 22.—When Mr. Vaughan brought out his piece called *Love's Metamorphoses*, to which I wrought a musical prologue and Mrs. Wrighter sang it, a person was much wanted to play Maria. Mrs. Vaughan recommended the part to a young woman and pritty, who appeared to have abilities but was much neglected. This was the Mrs. Siddons who afterwards made so great a figure. The farce was performed in 1776.

Dec. 3, 1784.—I passed the day with my worthy friend Jackson. . . . He shew'd me the original letter of King Charles 1st, written with his own hand “to Capt. Pennington, to deliver up his ships to the French admiral before Rochelle, and if any of his captains refused, to force and compel them to do the same.” Can anything prove so much the hypocrisy of this prince? Felton knew the cause of the delay, and he probed the part in the State secret.

Jan. 2, 1785.—Lady Mills, altho' she has lost an eye, a cheek, a side, and a leg by the palsy, yet she went off with her footman to France. She is the wife of Sir Thomas Mills in India, a natural son of the Pretender by the sister of Lord Mansfield.

Jan. 15, 1785.—Mr. McKensie, a Scots advocate who had lent Millian and Rae one

hundred pounds, being first cousin to the first and uncle to the second, put an execution on their effects, whereon I had lent them 542*l.* When they waited on me to relate the event, I said, they might have had cause to repine had an Englishman served them so, but as he was a Scot and a relation they had no reason to complain.

March 22, 1785.—Mr. Jackson had ever been intimate in the late Lord Chatham's family, and speaking of Mr. Wm. Pitt, the present Minister, Lord Chatham would often say to Mr. J. when he was there, "I recommend you, sir, to talk with my son William, who tho' a youth of 13 years old, yet you will not find him unentertaining or uninformed." Mr. J. indeed was amazed at his abilities, his information and logick, in the study of which he was fond and laborious.

Captain Thompson and Horace Walpole each in their several styles record the outburst of aeronaut errantry which distinguished the autumn and winter of 1784-5. The following extracts are from the former, and there are other entries like them:—

Sept. 27th, 1784.—Mr. Sheldon, a man of surgical ability, but an arrant Quixot in air-balloon bubbles, made a trip to France to improve himself in the style and manner of the process, and obtained Lord Folley's garden to exhibit his airy nonsense in. The country was deserted to attend this matter. The balloon was of canvas and filled with straw and smoke, and four gentlemen *Daedali* to ascend. However, the machine burst and many thousands disappointed returned home, or visited Lunardi's at the Pantheon, where they took 1,500 shillings the first day's exhibition. The madness of the age is not to be described. Every head seems filled with balloon materials, and is borne as wind and folly drive.

March 23rd, 1785.—A severe cold day with snow storms. I entered the fields to see Zambeccari and Sir E. Vernon mount at the tail of a balloon-kite into the air. The first is an Italian sailor and served as a lieutenant under Don Langora at the fight of St. Vincent, was cashiered for some misdemeanour, and emigrated to England as an adventurer in the air. The second is an English admiral—not sane—his friends ought to have confined him to a fire-side at Chelsea. The day on earth is so severe that the atmosphere must be severely frigid, at least thirty degrees colder. The velocity of the balloon was wonderful, and out of sight in half —. My own opinion is they may perish by the cold.

The last date in the book informs us that though suffering much from the coldness, as our critic anticipated, the voyagers returned to *terra firma* after a forty miles' run in one hour, having gained an altitude of three miles.

This little volume, which we have been picking and plundering for the reader, without betraying any new individual fact of historical interest, or showing any trace of a genius above the poetaster's, yet has the merit of enabling the men of to-day to shake hands with their grandfathers more effectually than any book of which we know. The sweep of the scythe has passed over the men and women of whom we read; but in these pages we seem to see them live and move again, as if we met them in Fleet-street or Bedford-square. Passed quite away, but not much more than just passed, they have the fascination of being exactly out of reach of living memory, beyond the visible horizon, yet tantalizingly near its brink. We knew the faces of many of them from the recent National Portrait Exhibition. John Wilkes in particular, with his long visage, and self-complacent smirk, and restless-looking eye, seated with his daughter

at his elbow, looks quite as wicked on canvas as Thompson describes him. What a little way below the sod they seem to lie, yet so completely gone! Their morals and manners are painted in the busy gossiping chronicle of our Captain; and they are certainly, with great respect for our grandsires, not such as to make us greatly regret that gone they are. John Wilkes himself, for instance, was evidently one of the most amusing men of his period. Of some of his table-talk Boswell has given a sample, but it has evidently run through the filter of the exceptionally decent society among whom the occasion of Boswell's meeting Wilkes occurred, and does not represent the man as he for the most part was and talked. And Thompson constantly shows how largely society was "tarred with the same brush" as John Wilkes. He seizes on the most repulsive features of a doubtful story, dwells upon their worst supposable side, and calls in the aid of such wit and fancy as he has at command, to give liveliness to the exposure. Our older dramatists constantly make or find occasions for loose *equiroques* in their dialogue; Captain Thompson transfers the affection so manifested for what is vicious, from the stage affection to that of real life. The rule suggested by his diary is, to believe in nothing as harmless, and pass by nothing as doubtful, which can by possibility be made to appear evil. Such satire, under the plea of unmasking vice, really propagates it, and rubs in the impurity which it professes to wish to efface.

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